

Escape From France

by Jason Lombardozi

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Before the United States and its allies invaded Europe in 1944, Americans flew bombing missions over France from bases in Great Britain. Their mission was to stop Nazi Germany during World War II (1939-1945). Jason interviewed his great-uncle, Ardell [Adie] Bollinger, who was shot down over France in 1943.



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Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler wanted to conquer France.

My great-uncle, Adie, enlisted in the Army in July 1942. Instead of becoming a paratrooper as he had hoped, Adie went to radio school and joined a B-17 bomber group. In May 1943, he was sent overseas to England.

During one mission, Uncle Adie was shot down. He jumped out of his plane into an open field. He decided to lie down in the field because the Germans would look in the barns and buildings.

The next morning, a local priest and three other Frenchmen brought bread and milk for Uncle Adie. The priest told him the Germans had left. The priest also told Uncle Adie that there were other Americans who had survived being shot down. One needed medical attention. The other men were named Kelly, a gunner, and Calais, an assistant radio operator.

All wanted to get back to England. The best route, they decided, was to cross the Pyrenees mountains into Spain.

They would spend their nights sleeping in haystacks and their days walking. They would knock on doors asking for food. A man at one home was friendly and gave the three fliers food.

The next morning, an old truck picked up the Americans and drove them to a château 20 miles away, where they spent two weeks. The château was part of the French underground, which throughout the war resisted the Germans.

The lady at the château taught the fliers some French and gave them clothes and shoes to wear. However, Uncle Adie's feet were too big. They gave him wooden shoes. Uncle Adie said there was no way he was walking to Spain in wooden shoes.

One Saturday night, the same truck dropped off the Americans in a village square. A girl with a bicycle quickly grabbed Uncle Adie's arm and walked him to a row of houses. The girl knocked on a

door of one of the houses. A man appeared and opened the door. The man who opened the door spoke English. He said the Americans had to stay there for a while. The plan was to get the fliers to Paris; then [they would] take a train south to the Pyrenees.

But, the Germans had captured the leader of the underground. Uncle Adie and the others decided to go to England alone. Uncle Adie found a priest who spoke English. The priest introduced the Americans to a French journalist.

The journalist took them to the house of a fisherman, who said he could get the Americans back to England by boat. When the time came, they went down to the harbor and met about 25 others- Americans, British, and Frenchmen-all trying to escape, including a former member of Uncle Adie's crew, Jim Armstrong. The plan didn't work.

Finally, a few weeks later, Uncle Adie got in a small boat jammed with people. They drifted down the river, out of the harbor, and into the ocean. They had escaped.

conquer

con · quer

Advanced Definition

transitive verb

1. to gain or overcome by force, esp. armed force.

The invading army conquered all the lands to the north.

The people never forgot how they were conquered by the invaders.

2. to gain dominance over by overcoming obstacles.

Doctors are trying to conquer this dreadful disease.

3. to master or overcome by moral or mental strength.

He finally conquered his fear of flying.

intransitive verb

1. to achieve victory; win.

He fought the illness bravely, but finally death conquered.

Spanish cognate

conquistar: The Spanish word *conquistar* means conquer.

These are some examples of how the word or forms of the word are used:

1. Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler wanted to **conquer** France.
2. First, he led Incas to **conquer** and claim struggling towns nearby.
3. His weakness allowed an outsider, Sumanguru, to come and **conquer** Mali.
4. Then came Francisco Pizarro, the conquistador who wanted to **conquer** the Incas.
5. Led by Adolf Hitler, the German army went on to **conquer** much of Europe.
6. His guns and horses enabled him to **conquer** the rest of one of the greatest civilizations in his search for riches.

7. In the 1500s, the Spanish began to **invade**. They took over the last Mayan city in 1697.
8. Lee's army was so devastated by the fighting that the South would not **invade** the North again during the war.
9. The Soviets said they would remove the nuclear missiles if the U. S. promised not to **invade** Cuba and to remove its missiles from Turkey, one of the Soviet Union's neighbors.

He resisted the temptation to say something sarcastic to this pompous woman.

Although her urge to confide was strong, she resisted telling him everything.

intransitive verb

1. to assert oneself in opposition.

If the enemy invades our country, we will resist with all our might.

Spanish cognate

resistir: The Spanish word *resistir* means resist.

These are some examples of how the word or forms of the word are used:

1. The good news is peer pressure isn't always something to fear. Your decisions are yours to make. Take the time to make them wisely. **Resisting** negative peer pressure is a challenge, but it is definitely possible.
2. Unlike silver and some other metals, gold does not lose its brilliance or tarnish when it is exposed to water or air. Gold is also exceptionally **resistant** to the effects of acid and does not corrode easily.
3. Moving quickly but silently, Rick opened the kitchen door and went to work, nestling a tiny firework in the bottom of each cupcake. He **resisted** the urge to eat one of the little cakes. This was no time to goof around.
4. All through the 1800's, Asante fought small battles with British soldiers who were trying to colonize the land. Finally, in 1902, Britain took the Asante kingdom and made it part of the huge British Empire. Britain named the area "The Gold Coast" because of its wealth. The Asante were fiercely proud and **resisted** British rule. In 1957, they were the first African colony to gain independence from Europe. The Africans named their Republic Ghana, after the first of the glorious ancient African empires.
5. Tim wasn't spelunking anymore. He was moving past the standard forms of an office. He was walking down rows of cubicles on his way to the watercooler, and he hated it. He wanted to go back to the rundown caverns he loved so dearly. He wanted to run his hands over a man made creation that could not **resist** the pull of a more natural order. He wanted to walk through a space engineered to be one thing, but that had been reclaimed, over time, by a world greater than the design specifications.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. When the Americans were trying to leave France, they went to a château before going to

- A. Paris.
- B. Spain.
- C. the French underground.
- D. a man's house.

2. The other man (besides great uncle Adie) who operated radios was

- A. the priest.
- B. Kelly.
- C. Calais.
- D. Jim Armstrong.

3. A journalist helped the fliers escape from France after they were helped by

- A. a gunner.
- B. a fisherman.
- C. a pilot.
- D. a priest.

4. The reason the fliers didn't get to Paris was because

- A. Paris was occupied by the Germans.
- B. the Germans had captured the leader of the underground.
- C. no trucks were going that way.
- D. the fisherman advised against going that way.

5. The fliers kept changing plans and methods of transportation to escape from France. List the methods of transportation in the order that the fliers used them.

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The fliers escaped by foot, then by truck. After that, they tried to escape by train, and then they finally escaped by boat.