

Exécutions par le SD de parachutistes britanniques de l'Opération Loyton

Panorama résumé : <http://www.resistance-deportation.org/spip.php?article60>

Principaux lieux d'exécution : <http://www.resistance-deportation.org/spip.php?rubrique75>

Cas de l'exécution de 8 hommes du 2ème SAS à Saint Dié, hameau des Moitresses

Qui sont ces hommes :

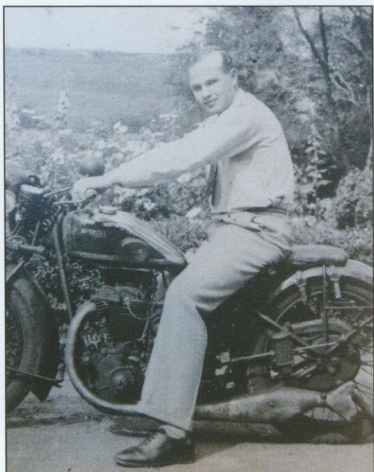
Ils ont été capturés dans leur parcours de Pierre-Percée vers Moussey, sur dénonciation (G M), le 14 septembre à Allarmont scierie de La Turbine. Transférés dans plusieurs officines du SD (Raon l'Etape, Cirey, Saint Dié...). Exécutés quelques jours plus tard par le SD Ernst/kommando de Saint Dié. Leurs noms : Lt Black et 4 de ses hommes (Cpl Winder, Pcts Dowling, Lloyd et Salter), 3 hommes du Lt Marx (Sgt Terry-Hall, Cpl Ivison et Pct Crosier)

Explication générale dans 2 documents ci-dessous :

- Au travers du parcours du Lt Black : document extrait de « The SAS and LRDG Roll of Honour 1941-1947 » : <http://sas-lrdg-roh.com/>
- Extrait de « Missing Parachutists »

Parcours du Lt Black, extrait de « The SAS and LRDG Roll of Honour 1941-1947 »

**LIEUTENANT JAMES DESMOND BLACK [262193] HOME GUARD, ROYAL SCOTS,
LOWLAND REGIMENT, ARGYLL AND SUTHERLAND HIGHLANDERS AND 2ND SAS (2 SQN)**



Known as Desmond to both family and friends, Black was born on 21 November 1923 at Didsbury in Manchester. After a period of five years at Port Said, Egypt, where he attended a private school, his family settled at Tongland in Kirkcudbrightshire. Here he continued his education at Kirkcudbright Academy and Dollar Academy where he was a member of the OTC from 1937 to 1940. At the outbreak of the war he had also joined the local Home Guard and, being the owner of a motorcycle, became its dispatch rider. Knowing that he would be called up he worked on a farm to get fit and in November 1941 joined the 70th (Young Soldiers) Battalion, Royal Scots, at Dumfries (service number 3066367). Transferring to the 1st Battalion, Lowland Regiment, the following February he was attached as a lance-corporal to the 6th Battalion, King's Own Scottish Borderers, for pre-OCTU training late that April. After a period with the 10th Infantry Training Centre at Berwick he was sent to Wrotham in Kent for further instruction and then on to 161 OCTU at Aldershot in October 1942. He was

subsequently commissioned into the 11th Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, his father's former regiment, at the beginning of February 1943 and from April was attached to the Royal Scots, also one of his father's regiments, for garrison duty on Gibraltar.

Having been interviewed on the Rock by Major Potter Miller-Mundy of 2nd SAS, Black sailed to Algiers and took a truck to Philippeville where he joined the Regiment on 15 December 1943. After parachute training west of Algiers he returned to the UK the following March where he was stationed in Ayrshire. During the subsequent build-up training for D-Day operations he often brought his troop back to the family home where excursions to the local pub sometimes resulted in minor trouble. On one such occasion they stole the local policeman's car (personal interview with his brother, Donald Black, 2012).

Black parachuted into OPERATION LOYTON in the Vosges département of eastern France on the night of 6–7 September 1944 as a member of Major Denny Reynolds' reinforcement party. There is some confusion as to how his stick subsequently became separated from the main SAS group: 'Missing Parachutists', the SAS War Crimes Investigation Team's final report, states that this occurred during the crossing of the Plaine valley on the 10th whilst other documents, such as 2nd SAS' Casualty Report, state that it was separated after an attack on Lt-Colonel Brian Franks' base east of Pierre-Percée the following day. The report of Lance-corporal Joseph Zandarco, a Frenchman serving in 2 Squadron, 2nd SAS, appears to confirm the latter theory:

We were attacked on 9 Jun [*sic* – September] by the Germans, who had learned of our presence through a French family in a nearby farmhouse. The daughter was enceinte [a French euphemism for pregnant] by a German and the son was a Milicien. We had contacted them in order to get food. They lived at Pierre Percee, south-east of Badonviller.

The Germans fired on us from all sides before they were nearby. Major Reynolds, in charge of our party, was wounded and later disappeared into the woods. Lt Black was also wounded. We dispersed and ran for it [WO 208/3351 – see Reynolds' entry below].

However, Franks, the CO, stated that having crossed the valley he tasked Black with ambushing enemy troops on 11 September. Whatever the case Black's party was seen by Madame Yorg at her house in Les Collins where the men brewed tea before moving to the house adjoining the La Turbine sawmill east of Pierre-Percée on the valley floor. Here they found Sergeant Frank Terry-Hall, Corporal Thomas Ivison and Parachutist Jack Crosier who had been separated from Lieutenant 'Karl' Marx on the 9th (see Terry-Hall's entry within this section for full details). It was probably this latter party's use of a French guide, Gaston Mathieu, which resulted in the whole group's betrayal to the Sicherheitsdienst

(SD, the intelligence arm of the SS) at Raon-l'Étape. Quite how bad Black's wound was at this stage is unknown and although it is often reported that it was in the ensuing action on the 15th, during which he and the others were captured, that he was wounded in the leg, Zandarco's statement suggests that he had previously ignored his wound and carried on with his tasks. Paul Chavane, a French agent of the Gestapo, later outlined the events of the 15th:

I took part in this action myself as a chauffeur. We left from St Die to arrive at the house at nightfall. All together there were twelve vehicles. I remained as a guard for these vehicles. Four agents were sent up to the farm [*sic* – sawmill] to see if the parachutists were still there, and practically immediately the engagement began.

Fire was opened from two sides. The wife of the farmer [Maria Thirion] was killed during this engagement. During a pause in the fire the farm was encircled and the parachutists taken prisoner. The owner of the farm [Leon Marchal] was killed by a shot from the revolver of the German officer who commanded the action.

The parachutist prisoners were placed in my green lorry and were taken to La Creche at Raon l'Étape [an outpost of the SD's Kommando Ernst]. Here they were interrogated and searched. We found compasses, and silk maps which were taken from them. Interrogation was carried out by one called Manuel, the civil agent of Berger, and who had been wounded in the hand during the course of the engagement.

Manuel, born in Tiflis, was of Yugoslav nationality, and had been employed at the American Embassy in Paris before the war.

After their interrogation the parachutists were taken to a house which may have been the Hotel des Vosges at Raon l'Étape. Here they remained for the rest of the night [WO 309/703].

'Missing Parachutists' states the group was forced to march from La Creche towards Badonviller but that shortly after crossing the bridge over the Plaine river a truck was fetched, progress being slow as the wounded Black needed to be carried. The group was driven to a house at Badonviller occupied by the Kommando Pullmer and then on to Schirmeck Concentration Camp where it arrived on the 16th at around 2000hrs. The men remained one or two nights in the cells, Black having his wound dressed by Dr Stoll, the camp doctor. A gaiter, bearing Black's name, was kept by a camp stretcher-bearer and this was later used as evidence at the ensuing war crimes tribunal. Dr Hans Ernst, leader of the Kommando Ernst at Saint-Dié, is said to have exhibited extreme anger with his subordinate that he had forwarded the prisoners to Schirmeck without keeping them for 'unit disposal'. He persisted until the men were retrieved by truck the following Sunday at about 0900hrs (WO 218/222).

Although Chavane later recalled a somewhat different version of events from La Creche, his statement provided initial clues as to the group's fate:

The next day between 10 and 12 'o' clock in the morning, I took these parachutists in my lorry to St Die ... when we arrived there the parachutists were taken to the hospital at Foucharupt, where they were put in cells.

They were interrogated there the same day by Stuscha Schossig. These parachutists were wearing khaki uniforms, with red berets and SAS on the shoulder. They did not remain in the hospital at Foucharupt but were taken to another barrack and placed in the cells of the military prison of this barracks.

Three or four days after they were interrogated their uniforms were distributed to Bruckle's agents at the Chateau des Allouette at St Die. I remember one agent called Josef Helandez who was wearing English uniform a few days afterwards.

Three or four days after the engagement I saw these parachutists again in the barracks prison. They had all been dressed in old civilian clothes; only the Lieutenant still had his uniform.

Between the 20th and 25th of September [the 20th] in the morning at roll call, Hscha. Griem detailed about ten men to form an execution squad. I can remember the name of Machatschek, the armourer, of Jacques Vasseur and Walter Jantzen. So far as I remember Vasseur was the only Frenchman. I believe that he now lives in Freiburg under a false name.

The same morning that Griem had given this order the men detailed went to the prison to fetch the parachutists in a truck. They left about 10 o'clock and came back about midday. I can remember that there were three Germans who could not eat their midday meal.

I imagine that the execution took place in the neighbourhood of St Die, but cannot give the exact place as I never heard Vasseur or another speak of it.

Shortly afterwards I left to join the Sonderkommando Berger, which was then at the Villa Matty at Hohwald. I remember that Berger told me that during the same period, that is between 15th and 20th of September, he had killed a number of parachutists in the region of between Schirmeck and Abreschviller [WO 309/703].

SS-Hauptscharführer Walter Jantzen, a member of the Kommando Ernst later accused of the killings, gave a more precise account and more plausible location for where the men met their fate:

A French agent employed by Berger, whose name was Manuel had discovered that there were some English soldiers in the area between the [col du] Donon and Raon l'Etape ...

Manuel and another agent of Berger went on alone to the house [on the 15th]. They came back to say that instead of the three soldiers they had expected there were now eight. Ustuf Wentzel decided to attack the house which was surrounded according to his orders. After an exchange of fire Manuel called on the English to surrender. After a time the answer came back 'OK'. The prisoners were accordingly brought out one by one and disarmed ...

The following day I again saw the eight English prisoners who had been handed to the Wehrmacht at Raon l'Etape. The Lieutenant, who had been wounded in the leg, had received treatment. The bullet had been removed, and the leg set in a splint ...

First we drove to the barracks to fetch the English prisoners from the cells [on the 20th]. They were brought out, and loaded onto the lorry. They were still wearing uniform. It is possible that some had their hands bound. Once the prisoners were loaded we drove off in the following order: one passenger car, the lorry carrying the prisoners, and another passenger car. I think that I was in the last car. We drove off from St Die [Saint-Dié] in the direction, so far as I can remember of Raon l'Etape. After a trip of half or three quarters of an hour, our convoy turned into a valley and followed a track for a short distance. We then halted.

Guards were then placed about the area to keep civilians from observing what was about to occur. Other guards were placed round the lorry to prevent the prisoners from escaping. Among these were Holm and I. I learnt afterwards that the grave higher up on the hillside had already been prepared.

I cannot remember with certainty whether the English prisoners were told that they were going to be shot before the first one was made to get down from the lorry. This first prisoner was made to take his uniform jacket and trousers off before he was taken up the hillside. At no time while I was observing this prisoner did he make any attempt to escape or to disobey the orders given to him. I heard a shot from higher up in the wood. In the same way all the other prisoners were made to take off their uniform, and were taken up singly into the wood where they were shot.

The last prisoner to be shot was the Lieutenant whose name I gave as 'Block' and who I am able to recognise from the photograph shown to me marked Lieutenant Black. As he was wounded, he had to be carried to the place of execution by some men. I cannot recall at this moment whether or not I was one of those who carried him. In all eight English prisoners were shot on this day. I never noticed any of them try to escape or to make any movement which might be misconstrued as an attempt to do so.

I went up to the grave at the end and helped to shovel the earth in [WO 309/233].

SS-Hauptscharführer Josef Pilz, another of those later accused of the killings, also described Black's murder:

As this was the last prisoner, and there were no more left who could have tried to escape, my task as a sentry was over, and so I walked up the hill after this group carrying the last prisoner. When we came to the grave, either Wetzel or Oppelt said that the splint should be taken off the prisoner's leg. He was laid on the ground for this purpose. I am not sure if I heard the prisoner groan as the splint was taken off. When I looked back again I saw Machatschek and Oppelt throw the body into the grave.

I helped to fill in the grave and noticed that the dead bodies still had shirts on. The uniform of the dead soldiers was taken back with us in the lorry to the barracks at St Die.

About two days later Jantzen gave me a number of pieces of maps, photographs of girls and note books to be burnt. I assumed that these had been taken from the dead soldiers. I carried out this order and burnt them all. Later on the same day Jantzen gave me a number of religious medallions on chains, and medals and buttons to take away and bury [WO 309/661].

SS-Oberscharführer Horst Gaede, also of the Kommando Ernst, later stated:

One of the last prisoners who was taken up said 'I am soldier'. This gave me a pang because I understood the men only too well. They were completely right and it was also their right to be treated as prisoners of war as is laid down by the Geneva Convention. I was forced to think involuntarily of comrades who had been wounded and had fallen into the hands of the Russians, by whom they had been shot ...

The wounded Lieutenant Black, was to my knowledge, shot by Machatschek [WO 235/176].

In May 1946 the remains of the eight SAS were exhumed in the vicinity of Les Moitresses west of Saint-Dié and post-mortems carried out. The pathologist, Major Mant of the RAMC, later reported:

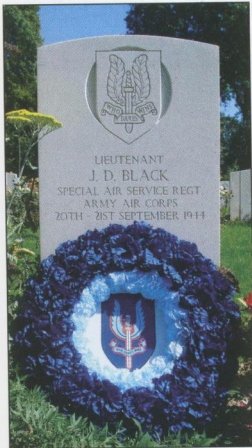
Contents of pockets: Left hand breast pocket; letter addressed to Lt J D Black, 2nd SAS, APO, containing one letter and 1,500 Fcs French in 50 Fc notes in series and one rifle bullet, fired. Clutched in right hand was small portion of crepe paper similar to that composing German paper bandage. One escape saw found in seam of shirt front, broken in two pieces [WO 235/176].

Black's one-time cipher pad was later found at the Gestapo headquarters on the rue d'Alsace in Strasbourg.

The 'St Die Case' was brought to trial before a British Military Court at Wuppertal, Germany, between 22 and 25 May 1946. Walter Jantzen, Herbert Griem, Otto Wetzel, Richard Albrecht, Otto Holm, August Geiger, Horst Gaede, Karl Golckel, Josef Pilz and Ludwig Koch, all members of the Kommando Ernst, were found guilty of being 'concerned in the killing' of the eight SAS. Griem and Wetzel were sentenced to death and executed that September. Although the Deputy Judge Advocate General considered Jantzen's death sentence 'unreasonable' he was also executed around the same time, presumably for involvement in additional war crimes other than the murder of Sergeant Jock Hay's stick for which he received a custodial sentence. The remainder were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment ranging from three to thirteen years. Four of them had already received prison sentences for involvement in the murder of Hay's stick (see his entry within this section for full details). Those incarcerated were subsequently released for reasons of 'good conduct', 'pre-trial custody' or 'Christmas clemency'.

Ernst himself escaped from American custody to East Germany, only to be sent to a gulag in 1947 by the Russian authorities. He was released in 1956 as part of an amnesty and received compensation. Although sentenced to death three times in absentia for crimes including the mass deportation to concentration camps of citizens of Moussey, the French rulings were not recognised by West Germany. He subsequently practised law until 1977 when persistent pressure from Nazi hunters Serge and Beate Klarsfeld resulted in denial of his right to do so. By the time a case was ready in 1981 he was allegedly in too poor a state of health to stand trial. He died a free man in 1991.

Senior German officers implicated in all of the war crimes cases found in this section were tried at Wuppertal between 17 June and 11 July 1946: SS-Obergruppenführer Karl Oberg (Gestapo chief for France), SS-Standartenführer Dr Erich Isselhorst (SD commander in Alsace), and SS-Obersturmbannführer Wilhelm Schneider (deputy to Isselhorst) were sentenced to death. Oberg eventually walked free whilst his two subordinates were hanged. Sturmbannführer Gustav Schlierbach (Gestapo chief in Strasbourg) was sentenced to ten years imprisonment and Generalleutnant Willy Seegers (Commander-in-Chief of the Wehrmacht in Alsace) was sentenced to three.



Son of Major John Black and Mai Black (née Cowley) of Ellerslie, Tongland, Kirkcudbright – Brother of Donald Black.

Age 20.

No inscription.

Grave 3.K.13. Also commemorated on Ringford's war memorial near Tongland – A plaque originally mounted within Tongland Parish Church bearing Black's name is now housed in Ringford Village Hall.

Extrait de « Missing Parachutits »

Case 6

St. Dié

Between
14. 9. 1944 and
30. 9. 1944

Lieut. Black and his party of 4 men Cpl. Winder, Pet. Dowling, Pet. Lloyd and Pet. Salter became separated from the main S.A.S. party during the crossing of the Plaine valley on the 10th of September. They were next seen by Mme. Yorg of Les Colins, sheet 36/16. 36868, at whose house they brewed some tea. Towards evening they continued to the house adjoining the scierie La Turbine 445868. Here already 3 further S.A.S. who had been in an action at La Chapelotte 425874 were hiding, these were Sgt. Terry-Hall, Cpl. Iveson and Pet. Crosier. It was probably the first of these two parties which had made use of a French guide named Gaston Mathieu.

On the evidence of Georg Zähringer, this Frenchman reported the arrival of these parachutists to a member of the German S.D. in Raon l'Etape named Berger, employed by Kieffer. (see page 32.) Berger requested assistance from Kdo. zbV. 6 under Dr. Ernst, which at that time was in St. Dié, and a detachment was despatched under Hstuf. Albrecht to effect their capture.

After the ensuing action in which Lieut. Black was wounded in the leg, the French owner of the house was shot by Berger, and his wife was also killed in a manner which is not yet fully clear. The eight prisoners were then taken to Raon l'Etape where Kommando Ernst had an Aussenstelle at La Creche, under command of Teufel.

The British prisoners were seen here by M. Georges Noble who was able to recognise Crosier from a photograph shown to him, and also recollects that one of the prisoners was wounded in the leg.

The following morning they were despatched on foot in the direction of Badonviller, but shortly after crossing the bridge over the Plaine river at the end of the Rue Weswal, Laurette Roos was sent by the German guard to fetch M. Gabriel Chapelier and his milk truck to take the party on as the wounded man had to be carried by the others and progress had been necessarily slow. M. Chapelier states that he drove this party to the house in Badonviller occupied at that time by the Aussenstelle of Kommando Pullmer.

The next trace of this group is that they were seen by various witnesses being driven on the way through Allarmont and Vexaincourt towards Schirmeck. Their arrival at the camp is attested by Karl Buck, Josef Muth, Mlle. Hertenberger, Mlle. Diebolt, Mme. Spielmont, Leon Denu and many other witnesses, in particular by Dr. Stoll who dressed Lieut. Black's leg, and whom he remembers by name, and by Edouard Maess who helped to carry the stretcher on which Lieut. Black was lying. The gaiter from his wounded leg was kept by Maess. It bears the name Black on the inside, and is included as an exhibit.

(Maess had sent it to the F.F.I. in Strassburg, by whom it has been used in an exhibition of concentration camp relics for electioneering purposes.)

Either the following morning or 24 hours later, this group left Schirmeck in a closed truck accompanied probably by Ludwig Schlesinger, who at that time was working with the Gestapo in Strassburg and/or Le Thillot, but who had visited his wife who operated the teleprinter at Schirmeck camp.

Schmidt has an interesting piece of evidence that Gehrum telephoned from the office in which the former was working, shortly before Black's stick left, to say that they would be shot.

Karl Buck, the commandant of the camp states definitely that he was ordered to send them to Strassburg.

Dr. Isselhorst B.D.S. states that they were fetched from Schirmeck in order to enable Schneider to interrogate them at Strassburg, and that acting on subsequent representations made by Schneider, he gave orders for the group to be shot, about a week after their arrival in Strassburg. Schneider denies all knowledge of this case.

In this connection it is worth mentioning that the testimony of Georg Zähringer of Kommando Ernst discloses the fact that the identity discs of "the men who were captured at scierie, La Turbine" were hidden by Pilz, a member of Dr. Ernst's Kommando in the St. Dié area.

He states that Pilz told him that he had taken part in the murder of these same eight soldiers at St. Dié. Dr. Ernst is reported to have exhibited extreme anger with his subordinate Albrecht that he had forwarded these prisoners to Schirmeck without keeping them for unit disposal.

Paul Chavanne, Berger's driver was present at the capture of the party. He states that he drove the prisoners to St. Dié. There is however such overwhelming evidence of their presence at Schirmeck that it is hard to reconcile this information, Chavanne states further that he did not see the group again for some days and then that they had been changed into civilian clothes.

He reports that this party of captured parachutists were shot near St. Dié towards the end of September 1944.

The concierge of Villa des Alouettes, St. Dié, which was maintained as a Aussenstelle of Kommando Ernst after the move of the H.Q. to Saales, states that French Milice members of Kommando Ernst told her of the arrival of a number of English parachutist prisoners who were confined in the hospital. Her son later saw a pile of uniform clothing and equipment similar to that issued to Lieut. Black's party.

Accused and Suspect Accused

Staf.	ISSELHORST Erich
Ostuf.	SCHNEIDER Wilhelm
Hstuf.	GEHRUM Julius
Krim.-Rat	UHRING Robert
Ostuf.	SUHR
Hscha.	GRIEM
Stubaf.	ERNST Hans Dieter
Hstuf.	ALBRECHT
Ostuf.	VEESE Joachim
Oscha.	BRUCKLE
Uscha.	ZÄHRINGER Georg
Hscha.	PILZ Josef
?	BERGER Rudolf
Uscha.	MACHATSCHEK
?	VASSEUR
	JANTZEN

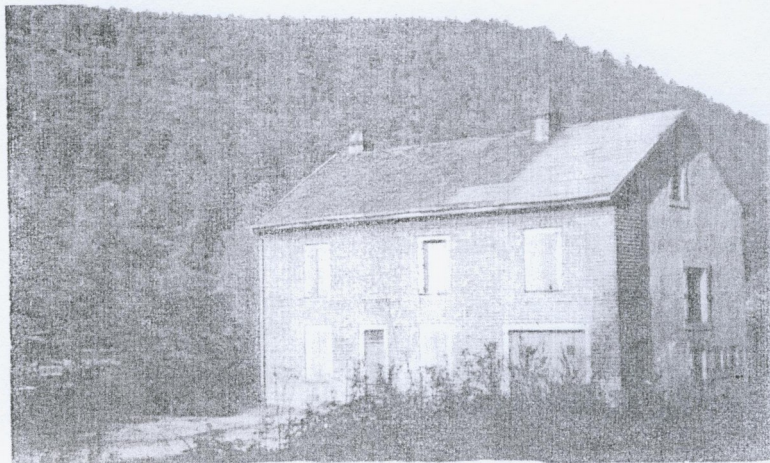
and such other members of Kdo. Ernst as may be involved particularly including the French detachment commanded by Bruckle.

Evidence appended

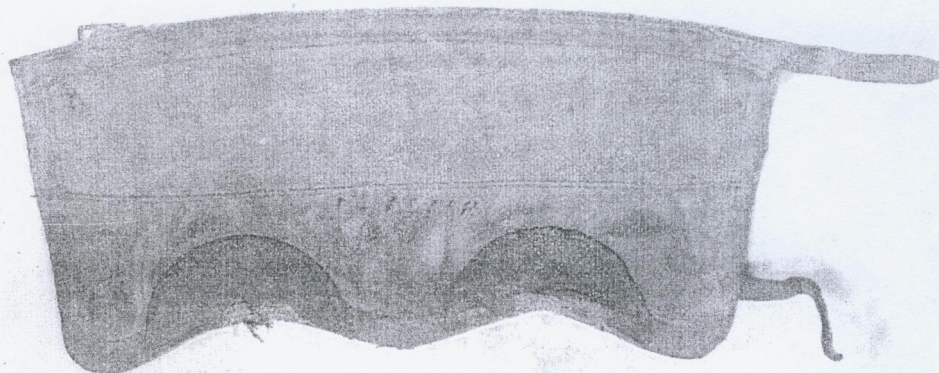
1. Statement by Georg Zähringer (1)
2. Statement by Georges Noble
3. Statement by Gabriel Chapelier
4. Statement by Jeanne Hertenberger
5. Statement by Josef Muth
6. Statement by Karl Buck
7. Statement by Erich Isselhorst
8. Statement by Wilhelm Schneider
9. Statement by Georg Zähringer (2)
10. Statement by Marcelle Cacheur
11. Statement by Roger Cacheur
12. Statement by Paul Chavanne

Exhibits

- A. Photographs of Lieut. Black's stick.
- B. Photostats of dental cards of Lieut. Black's stick.
- C. Lieut. Black's gaiter.
- D. Jojo code pad issued to Lieut. Black and Pct. Dowling's AB. 64. found at 10. Rue d' Alsace. Strassburg.



HOUSE SCIERIE LA TURBINÉ



Lieut. Black's garter



SCHLESINGER