

Escape from Avenue Foch

The story of Captain Paul Raymond Elie Tessier

F (French) Section SOE



This story came to The Secret WW2 Learning Network via a superb collection of documents, reports correspondence and photographs from Nick Tessier, grandson of Captain Paul Tessier. Nick's father, also Paul, was just a year old when his father was killed in action in France, but has kept this collection in pristine condition and with it, the memory of his father. His own son, Nick, and other members of the Tessier family have inherited the interest, to the extent that they created their own Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1883259491975947/?ref=share>. It was this Facebook page that SWW2LN Information Officer, Carole Brown, spotted and put Nick Tessier, and his father Paul, in touch with SWW2LN Trustee Paul McCue. Paul McCue agreed to bring forward his own research (as part of his 'Valençay 104' [project](#), of which Captain Tessier is an element) in order to complement the collection and the story hereby follows, with some of the photographs from the Tessier collection – do look at their Facebook page for more.

Escape from Avenue Foch

Captain Paul Raymond Elie Tessier, F Section SOE



Paul Tessier was born 15 October 1916 in the French Hospital and Dispensary at 172-176 Shaftesbury Avenue, London W1. The son of Denis Tessier, who was described as both Swiss and French, and a French mother, Alveline née Puyfourcat, Tessier had two sisters, Alice and Denise and two brothers, Edmond and Elie. His father was a pipe maker and the family home when Paul was born was at 20 Churchill Road in Homerton, London E9. Paul, Denise and Elie were born in England, while Alice and Edmond had been born in France, before the family moved to England. Tessier was recorded at the start of his SOE training as having French nationality at birth, but this is amended later in his file, showing him to have declared himself to be British by the majority age of 21.



The French Hospital and Dispensary in Shaftesbury Avenue, London W1

When Paul was aged seven, the family moved back to France and Tessier was educated at the *Collège de Draguignan*, some 70 kilometres from where his father (an invalid) worked as a manufacturing optician in Hyères (83), both locations being in the *Var département* of southern France. In 1930 Madame Tessier and her children returned to England, leaving Denis Tessier in France and Paul completed his education by attending a Continuation School in London until 1932. In addition to periodic return visits to France, Tessier also travelled to Switzerland and Italy. His knowledge and use of French was later to be described as ‘nearly fluent’.



DRAGUIGNAN (Var). — Le Collège.

Tessier as a schoolboy and (right, photo: author's coll.) the Collège de Draguignan.

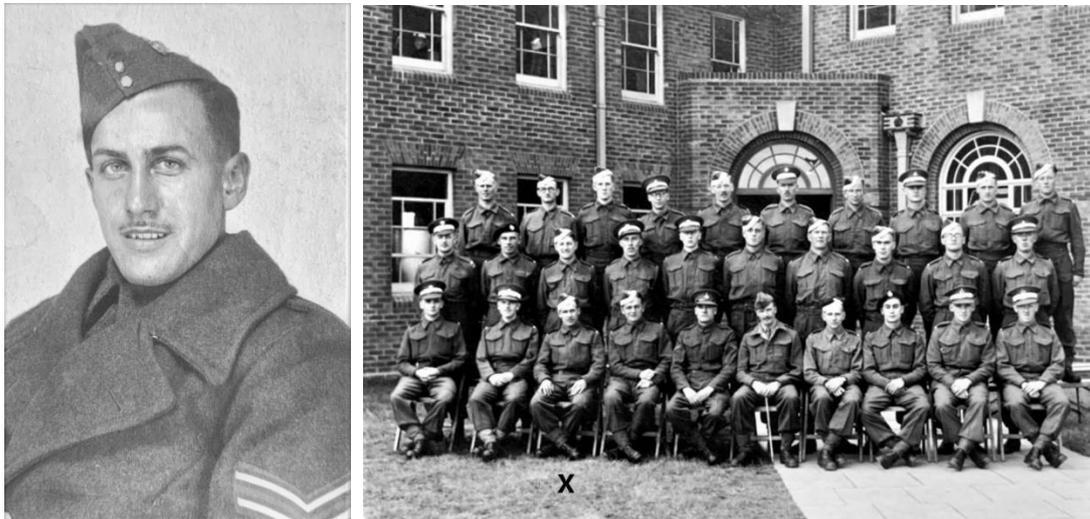
At the age of 16, Tessier undertook a three-year apprenticeship as a diamond setter and from 1935 onwards he had then worked in that trade in London, firstly in a self-employed capacity and then for the firm of Joseph and Pearce, long-established jewellers in Hatton Garden. In November 1936 he married a local girl, Lily Flowerday, from Clapton, London E9. While he was generally still known as

Paul Tessier, to Lily he was always “Ray”. Their first son, Roger, was born in 1937, their second, Paul, in 1943 and the family home was at Hemingford, 25 Moss Hall Grove, North Finchley, London N12.



Tessier’s wedding in 1936, his younger sister Denise is on the far left of the photo; and Lily with sons Roger (left) and Paul, pictured shortly after the war.

Before coming to SOE’s attention, Tessier had enlisted in the Royal Fusiliers, an infantry regiment of the British Army, in May 1940 with the service number 6470516. He was promoted quickly and by November 1940 he was a battalion intelligence NCO in the rank of Sergeant. He served in that capacity and undertook further infantry training until May 1942, when he obtained a posting to the 53rd Recce Regiment of the Reconnaissance Corps, an elite force formed only the year before to provide advanced mobile units ahead of infantry divisions – in this case for the 53rd Welsh Division. In July 1942 he successfully applied for a commission and joined 100 Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU) at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. 100 OCTU had recently been formed from the amalgamation of 101 OCTU of the Royal Armoured Corps with 162 OCTU of the Reconnaissance Corps.



Tessier, pictured while a Corporal in the Royal Fusiliers and (marked X) as an Officer Cadet at 100 OCTU, Sandhurst.

In an assessment dated 7 January 1943, Captain Maufe described Tessier as:

‘Dark Latin looking. Could pass as a Frenchman. French not extremely fluent but accent seems good. Volunteers for special duty. Has been seen by ISRB (?) about which he is very discreet’.

As noted by Maufe, Tessier had already contacted SOE/ISRBⁱ and this contact proved fruitful when, on 23 January 1943, he was formally posted out from the Reconnaissance Corps in preparation for his

recruitment by SOE. He signed the Official Secrets Act on 22 March 1943 and four days later began his training as an agent with Party 27ⁱⁱ, retaining the rank of Officer Cadet.

Despite some of his family still being resident in France, Tessier seems to have kept his true name for his training and was first sent to the F Section Preliminary School at STS 5, Wanborough Manor, near Guildford in Surrey in late March and early April of 1943, as trainee Y8ⁱⁱⁱ. The first comments of his conducting member of staff, Lance-Corporal Hodson, were mixed: 'This student is a very typical 27 [Frenchman]', but Hodson went on to acknowledge that 'He resents small restrictions but gets over the resentment very quickly and conforms with the regulations'. Equally, in his second report, Hodson noted 'He is thoroughly security minded and keen on the work', but also recorded 'He sulks if things don't go as he would like'.

Tessier continued to be assessed as reliable in terms of security, but Hodson had noted that Tessier's mother-in-law, Mrs Flowerday, lived in Guildford, only five miles away, and that Tessier's wife, Lily, had come down from north London to her mother's house so that Tessier could go to see her when trainees were allowed out on Thursday afternoons. This, in itself, seems to have been acceptable, but at the beginning of April, Tessier took three trainees to dinner with his wife. Two were members of his own Party 27Y, named as Y5 and Y6, while the third trainee, X3, was from the previous training party at Wanborough. Only Eric Cauchi (later MESSENGER/*Pedro*) is identifiable (trainee Y5) of the three. The occasion triggered a special report by the Wanborough staff and although Tessier notified Wanborough's Commandant, Major Ward, about the matter, the latter (newly-arrived to replace Major de Wesselow) deemed it a mistake on Tessier's part.



STS 5, 'Wanborough Manor', near Guildford in Surrey; and fellow-trainees Lt. Eric Cauchi.
Photos: author's coll.

There is no record of Tessier having attended a Group A Paramilitary School in Scotland, his SOE file suggesting that he progressed directly from Wanborough Manor to STS 51, the Parachute School at RAF Ringway. There, on 24 April 1943 his report read:

'Has done very well and gets a real kick out of jumping. He is really keen on the job and anxious to finish the training so that he can get down to the real thing. I have no doubt at all about his loyalty he has a very good opinion of himself and takes himself very seriously. Inclined to try and run the show himself. He gets impatient if the training programme does not go right. He got very worked up when the night scheme had to be cancelled on Friday night when it could have been done Thursday. On Monday he ran into someone who knew him at OCTU. He was

with several of the students at the time and it rather took him aback. He told the officer to forget he had seen him. He is very security minded and is very careful what he says when he is out and sees to it that the other students are when he is out with them. He goes out most evenings to practice (to use his own words) his new personality.'



RAF Ringway and scenes of ground training and parachute jumping from a static balloon and Whitley aircraft.
Photos: author's coll.

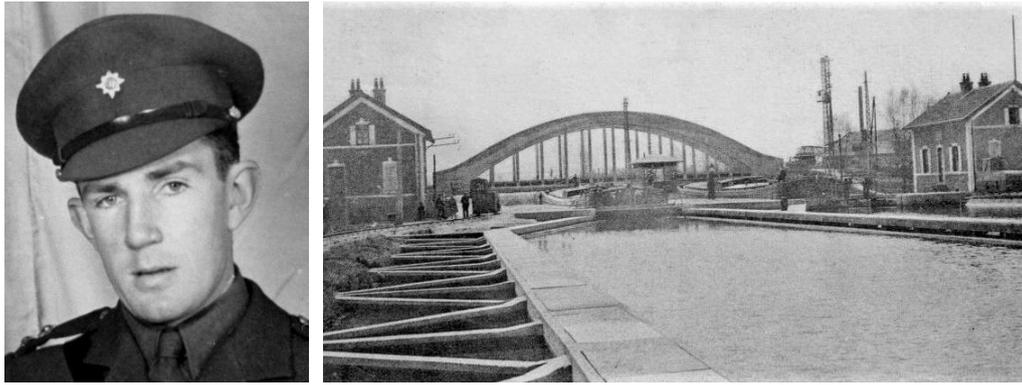
There is also no record of Tessier attending a Group B Finishing School at Beaulieu. This unusual training path might be explained by Tessier having received considerable prior military training and that he was already being considered for commando-type operations, rather than a clandestine role. From 1 July 1943 he was permanently posted to SOE and promoted to Lieutenant.

While the remainder of Tessier's training is not detailed, there is mention on his SOE file that he undertook training at a Group C establishment, STS 2, which was an operational holding school at 'Bellasis', on Box Hill near Dorking in Surrey. STS 2 had already been used earlier in 1943 by F Section for training members of a *coup de main* sabotage mission, SCULLION I. The syllabus there included PT, map reading, fieldcraft, weapons training (including rifle, Bren and Sten), Morse code, coding and demolitions. In October 1943 he undertook a mock interrogation by MI 5 which resulted in the report: 'A tough and extremely enthusiastic British officer, who although not very intelligent, has good powers of observation.'



STS 2 'Bellasis', near Dorking, Surrey. Photo: author.

The training at 'Bellasis', in addition to Tessier's earlier Army service, made him an ideal candidate for another *coup de main* operation planned by F Section. It is probable^{iv} that he was firstly part of the ten-man commando-style (though in civilian clothes) HOUSEKEEPER mission charged with the sabotage of the lock gates at Lesdins (02) on the Canal de Saint-Quentin in northern France. The operation was to be led by Captain Hugh Dormer (late of the Irish Guards), but after two attempts to depart from RAF Tempsford had been thwarted by poor weather, the operation was cancelled at the last minute after a message was received from another F Section agent, George Connerade (CALDER/*Jacquot*) already in the Lesdins area. Connerade, who had undertaken a lone reconnaissance as the first stage of HOUSEKEEPER, reported that someone had talked, a wave of arrests had followed and the guard on the lock gates had been strengthened in anticipation of an attack.



Captain Hugh Dormer and the lock gates at Lesdins. Photos: author's coll.

In place of HOUSEKEEPER, Tessier was given new operational orders for OPERATION DRESSMAKER, a two-element, four-man, sabotage attack against the tanneries in the Graulhet and Mazamet (81) areas of the Tarn *département* of southern, central France. This was the second *coup de main* operation mounted by F Section in quick succession in 1943, OPERATION SCULLION I having taken place, unsuccessfully, against an oil refinery between April and June. Lieutenant Georges 'Jean' Larcher (ACCOUNTANT/formerly *Albert* then *Jean*) had taken part in that earlier mission, but had hurt his back on landing and had to immediately evade back to England via Paris, Lyon and Spain. Now, having recovered from his injury, he was one of the other three men joining Tessier for DRESSMAKER. Tessier was to be the leader of DRESSMAKER A, accompanied by Lieutenant Albert Eskenazi (FINANCIER/*field name not known*)^v and targeting Graulhet. DRESSMAKER B was to be dropped near Mamazet, led by Larcher with Lieutenant William Cunningham. Tessier's codename, field name and false identity for DRESSMAKER are not recorded on his SOE file.



(L to R) Tessier and Eskenazi of DRESSMAKER I and Larcher and Cunningham of DRESSMAKER II.
Photos: author's coll.

The intelligence and briefing for DRESSMAKER left much to be desired. No aerial photographs were available and neither Tessier nor Larcher were given a specific target, their orders simply being that they should reconnoitre their respective town, select a suitable factory target (or targets), and sabotage it by placing explosive charges in the factory's drying house. The factories were reported to be of the leather and fur industry (Graulhet had once been termed the leather capital of the world) and were now reported to be producing material for the German war effort. Much of the preparation for the mission was done at the last moment, clothing was not ready until very late and false ID documentation was produced only two hours before take-off. To his horror, Larcher found that his French ID displayed a picture of his brother (also serving with F Section) and a correct card was produced only 10 minutes before the agents were taken to their aircraft. There was also no indication of the date of the last intelligence regarding the target areas, an omission which was later to be recognised as a gross error.

The insertion of the two two-man teams was on the night of 17/18 August 1943, Flying Officer Brown flying Halifax 'E' of 138 (SD) Squadron from RAF Tempsford. Tessier and Eskenaki of DRESSMAKER A were the first to be dropped and parachuted 'blind', without a reception committee, into France about four kilometres north-west of Graulhet, in the early hours of 19 August 1943. They landed safely, together with their package of suitcases and explosives, on hilly ground.



RAF Tempsford in 1943.



A Halifax of 138 (SD) Squadron at Tempsford.



Dropping from a Halifax – recreated for the film 'Now it Can Be Told'.
Photos: author's coll.

The operation nevertheless got off to a poor start. As he had descended, Tessier could see people who had come out from a nearby farm, alerted by the noise of the Halifax. These people watched as the two agents landed and although they came forward and proved themselves friendly and willing to help, they confirmed that Tessier and Eskenazi were ten kilometres from their targeted dropping point. The local people had been baking white bread (a luxury that had to be produced covertly) and had broken off to try to see the aircraft which had roared low overhead. The farmer of the land on which the agents had landed offered to shelter the two unexpected arrivals and to take care of their parachutes, harnesses and parcel of explosives.

Gratefully accepting the offer of beds for the remainder of the night, Tessier first had a discussion with the farmer's son which revealed further disturbing news about their target. According to the young Frenchman, no factory in the area was still in use, due to an economic recession in the 1930's. There was a large factory north of Graulhet in which German troops were billeted, but the farmer's son was certain that the factory had not worked since before the war. Tessier nevertheless determined to reach and reconnoitre the factory, hoping it might also be a depot for stock taken from other factories and consequently worthy of sabotage.

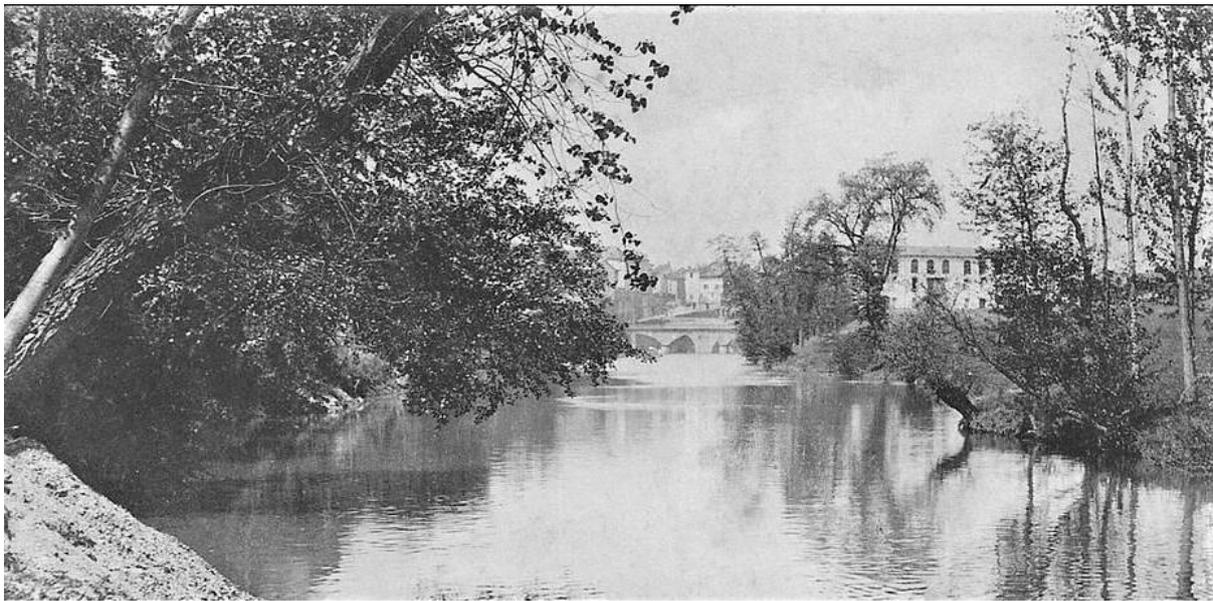
Tessier and Eskenazi therefore set off across country the next morning for Graulhet. They had been woken early, after only a few hours' sleep, by the farmer who was worried because his neighbours (who had been in his house for the illicit bread baking) already knew of the presence of parachutists on his farm. Tessier therefore ordered a rapid departure. The only challenge during the two men's march came from finding water, which was scarce after two years of drought in the area. After stopping at a farm to replenish water bottles, they reached the outskirts of Graulhet and Tessier left Eskenazi in hiding with their stores while he continued on into the town, alone, to undertake a close survey of activity.

Entering Graulhet at 11.30, he spent three hours taking stock of local industry. He counted 27 factories of varying sizes, but all were disused and he saw not a single workman. Engaging a café owner in conversation, Tessier confirmed that all factories had been closed for some time, but also that German troops were stationed in one of the disused sites north of the town, as described the night before by the farmer's son.

After spending the night sleeping in in the open countryside, Tessier sent Eskenazi to carry out a reconnaissance of the Germans' troop depot. Eskenazi confirmed the presence of the enemy and that

night he and Tessier attempted a sabotage attack. As they approached the target, however, they were almost spotted by sentries that were guarding the establishment and they then realised that a seven-foot high trellis barbed wire fence surrounded the factory. Deeming that it would be impossible to breach this barrier, Tessier and Eskenazi withdrew.

The following day, Tessier again walked into Graulhet to see if he might yet identify any factory still working. He was stopped and asked for his papers by a gendarme who seemed satisfied with Tessier's explanation that he was on holiday – for despite its economic and industrial downturn, Graulhet had many historic buildings and a thriving market. Still seeking to attack a target and use his explosives, Tessier identified a large factory on the outskirts of the town which, although not working, seemed worthy of sabotage. When approaching it that night, the agents were again thwarted when, instead of the factory being on their side of the River Dadou, it proved to be on the opposite south bank.



The River Dadou at Graulhet, riverside tanneries can be seen in the background.
Photo: author's coll.

Although Tessier thought it possible to get across the river (which was not more than 6 or 7 feet deep) there was a high bank at the other side and he was not sure that he and Eskenazi would be able to get out. After one abortive attempt, Tessier reluctantly accepted that the operation had been something of a fiasco, and decided to abandon this second attempted attack and to make for their designated safe house in the city of Lyon, some 380 kilometres away. There, they would be inserted into the VIC^{vi} escape line operated by SOE's DF Section, and guided over the Pyrenees into neutral Spain.

To reach Lyon, the two agents would need to first catch a train from Gaillac (81), some 20 kilometres away, to Toulouse and catch a connecting train to Lyon, some 420 kilometres in the opposite direction (north-east) to the Spanish border. The frontier, at its nearest point, was only 170 kilometres south of Toulouse, and just 180 kilometres from Perpignan, an important staging post for evaders following the escape line over the Pyrenees. But SOE's instructions were clear – the escape line was to be entered at Lyon.

Before starting on the walk to the station at Gaillac, Tessier and Eskenazi disposed of their redundant explosives by throwing them in the river. Once at Toulouse, after a train journey of an hour or so from Gaillac, they needed to buy tickets for Lyon and Tessier had an uncomfortable moment when he failed to follow the normal required practice of tendering the exact money, change being in short supply. In response to the rebuke from the ticket clerk, Tessier said he simply did not have the correct money.

The difficult moment passed, but Tessier made a mental note to include this in his post-operation report, as it had potentially marked him as someone not aware of local conditions. What Tessier did know, was to avoid travelling to Lyon by the fast train service as this required a '*fiche d'admission*' and a check of identity documentation. He therefore bought third class tickets, thereby also avoiding any German troops who invariably travelled first or second class.

Yet another difficult moment was encountered when Tessier and Eskenazi emerged onto the platform at Toulouse to wait an hour for their train to Lyon. Also on the platform were the two members of DRESSMAKER B, Lieutenants Larcher and Cunningham. The two pairs of agents studiously avoided each other and travelled separately on the train. But Larcher, in his later lengthy criticism of the planning and equipping of DRESSMAKER, noted that the agents were clothed in similar new suits and had the same type of suitcase.

In Lyon, Tessier made sure to avoid Larcher and Cunningham as he and Eskenazi joined up again to make their way to the safe house of the escape line. It was only 6 a.m., however, and Larcher decided to wait until 10 a.m. to approach the safe house. He and Eskenazi therefore whiled away the time in a church.

At the safe house, they were welcomed and given food and while they were eating Larcher arrived. He explained that he had, like Tessier, not wanted to call at the house too early and he had therefore gone to another safe house which he had used successfully only a few months before while evading, injured, from OPERATION SCULLION I. He had been given an enthusiastic welcome and encouraged to stay there which he therefore chose to do, with Cunningham.

Tessier and Eskenazi stayed for 12 days at their own safe house, 17 rue Ferrandière in the centre of Lyon, awaiting word when they might be conducted down the escape line to Spain. Both were French speakers, so they were able to go out during the day and took the opportunity to venture from Lyon into the local countryside.



The safe house at 17 rue Ferrandière, Lyon. Photo: author's coll.

Henri Levin (aka '*Georges*', Georges Levin, George Lemelus, Eugène Lecoq and George Lesieur), second-in-command of DF Section's VIC line, was responsible for arranging the exfiltration of Tessier and Eskenazi from Lyon and while still in the city, the agents were introduced to another of VIC's

helpers, Thérèse Mitrani '*Denise*', a woman of about 35 years of age who was to be their guide for a later part of their evasion.

Having been given two days' notice, Tessier and Eskenazi took a night train to Narbonne on the first stage of their journey to Spain. They had to give up their seats to some German troops, but fortunately found places in an extra carriage which was added to the train. The journey was uneventful, other than a stop was made at about 1 a.m. due, it was believed, to an air raid alert.

At Narbonne, *Denise* was waiting for them and took Tessier and Eskenazi to meet two other evaders who were in the station's waiting room. Tessier, at least, needed no introduction, for the pair were Captain Hugh Dormer^{viii} and Sergeant Charles Birch, both of the seven-man party of SOE's SCULLION II, operation, returning to Britain via the same escape route as Tessier and the DRESSMAKER teams. Dormer, as the team leader, and Birch would have trained with Tessier for the abortive 10-man mission to destroy the lock gates at Saint-Quentin. Though they did not then know it, Dormer and Birch were to be the only two of SCULLION II to succeed in reaching Britain. The five others (Demand, Graham, Amphlett, Sibree and Soskice were already in captivity and were subsequently executed.

In addition to his formal report on his evasion from France, Dormer kept a detailed diary which therefore gives a graphic description of the journey of Tessier and Eskenazi through the Pyrenees. Dormer refers to his fellow raiding party members by the initials of their surnames and the sole addition mentioned is the reference to a man, 'T', during the trek through the mountains. This can therefore now be identified as Tessier, though Dormer was careful not to mention that two of the party in the Pyrenees were also from F Section.

In Narbonne, Denise introduced the now four-strong party of Tessier, Eskenazi, Dormer and Birch, to a Spanish guide. They all then took the train to Perpignan. The group had a meal in the station buffet there, acutely conscious of three German soldiers eating at the next table. At dusk, they left and walked through the streets of the town, following their guide who was wheeling a bicycle. They passed a German barracks and continued out into the countryside, turning into a vineyard where they were introduced to another Spanish guide, called Fernandez, who was to take them over the Pyrenees.

The four F Section agents and their new guide set off, but had not gone far when Fernandez asked them to wait and went on ahead alone for a few minutes. He returned with four additional evaders, two men and two women who were French. As they were leaving France for good, they had brought a considerable amount of heavy luggage with them. Tessier and his fellow agents soon found themselves having to help carry the suitcases, eventually taking over those of the two women who came close to exhaustion as the climb through the mountains progressed.

The journey took three nights, the route often being through vineyards. They rested and slept during daylight, only under cover in the open and never in a house or barn. Keeping almost always in sight of the Mediterranean, they walked at night, skirting the main mass of the mountains and on the second night reached the frontier in the Spanish foothills. Despite many border posts, they crossed without incident. The journey had been uneventful apart from the physical challenge of carrying the Frenchwomen's luggage, and a minor quarrel caused by limited supplies of water for the party of nine. It had been very hot, even at night, and on reaching the Spanish side of the frontier they were forced to drink muddy water from which cows had also been drinking. On the third night, the guide brought them to a farm not far from Figueras and the group were hidden in the loft of a barn and fed by the Spanish farmer and his wife. After a day there, Tessier went on alone to a second safe house where he stayed another day before travelling to Barcelona to advise the British Consulate of the arrival in Spain of the four F Section agents. He did this as, at some point, the group seemed to have passed into the responsibility of a Belgian organisation and out of the hands of SOE's DF Section escape line.

Though the French group of four therefore seemed to be expected, the British were not and Fernandez had been unwilling to make contact with the British Consulate. The latter arranged taxis to pick up Eskenazi, Dormer and Birch and bring them to Barcelona while Tessier was taken to yet another safe house in the city. Four days later, he left for Madrid where he was registered at a police station as a Canadian alien. Parted from Dormer and Birch, Tessier and Eskenazi were put into a hotel in Madrid and three days later were taken to Gibraltar by car and flown back to Britain.^{viii}

Tessier's reaction to the out-of-date intelligence relating to DRESSMAKER is not recorded and his debriefing report was a bald statement of facts with little or no overt criticism of the poor planning. This was in marked contrast to the report by Larcher who, perhaps additionally irritated by his second unsuccessful operation within six months, pulled no punches^{ix}. Among his several criticisms was the fact that the two teams had not been provided with Tommy cookers with which to boil water. With fresh water in short supply, due to the prevailing drought conditions, three of the four agents had stomach problems from stagnant water. Tessier was the only man not recorded to have suffered.^x

Tessier also seems to have been the only member of DRESSMAKER to have been considered suitable for future missions; Eskenazi, Cunningham and Larcher took no further operational role with F Section. Having stated his willingness to undertake further clandestine work, he was approved to return to France and the indications are that his likely knowledge of the HOUSEKEEPER operation singled him out for a particular role. This was to not only work as an assistant to the Canadian Major Guy Biéler (MUSICIAN/*Tell*) who operated an extensive and successful circuit in and around Saint-Quentin (02) in northern France, but to also resurrect the sabotage of the lock gates at Lesdins. Biéler had been in the field since November 1942, but due to a back injury after a heavy landing by parachute, he had not begun working in the Saint-Quentin area until late February/early March 1943 and had quickly established a network of enthusiastic and loyal local helpers. Presumably, the thinking of F Section's staff was that the one-man mission of Tessier, assisted as necessary by the local *Résistance*, would have a much lower profile than the 10-man team that was HOUSEKEEPER.

In September 1943 Biéler had been joined by Yolande Beekman (PALMIST/*Mariette*) as his radio operator and the direct communication link that was thereby created was likely to have led to the lock gates target being revisited. It is also possible that someone on the SOE staff reasoned that Tessier, with his father's links to Switzerland, would be an appropriate addition to the team, since both Biéler and Beekman had Swiss family backgrounds. Tessier's code name was COMEDIAN, his field name *Théodore* and his false identity was in the name of Paul Terrier.



Guy Biéler and Yolande Beekman, leader and radio operator of the MUSICIAN circuit.
Photos: Jacqueline Biéler and author's coll.

Surviving SOE records suggest that the original plan for Tessier's lone insertion into France may have reflected the wish to keep Tessier's arrival as low-key as possible. It is known that two F Section circuits were notified of his despatch – MUSICIAN who were to expect him, but not to receive him, and another F Section circuit, JUGGLER. The records of 138 (SD) Squadron show two abortive attempts to drop a lone agent to a JUGGLER DZ near Cerilly (03), 40 kilometres north-east of Montluçon and deep in central France. This was 400 kilometres south of Saint-Quentin, but the dropping of agents far from their area of operations was not unknown in F Section. It often depended on which ground was considered safe at the time and in this case, it may have been also been that Tessier might have been required to check on JUGGLER or deliver a re-briefing. In the event, Tessier eventually had a much easier journey.

The first attempt to carry out OPERATION JUGGLER 5 and to drop the single parachutist that is thought to have been Tessier, was on the night of 4/5 January 1944 and flown by Flight Lieutenant Downes in a Halifax of 138 (SD) Squadron from RAF Tempsford. No reception committee or lights were seen and the aircraft turned for home. Two nights later, another attempt was made, by Warrant Officer Kennedy and again in a Halifax of 138 (SD) Squadron. This time, the weather was reported as bad and again, no reception party was seen. It was then a case of third time lucky when, instead of Tessier having to land to a distant JUGGLER reception, it was decided to add him to a drop of containers of arms and supplies organised for the MUSICIAN circuit. This was successfully managed in OPERATION MUSICIAN II by Flying Officer Cole on the night of 10/11 January 1944, once more from a Halifax of 138 (SD) Squadron at Tempsford.

Tessier landed safely, albeit in a different field to that where MUSICIAN's helpers had organised their reception committee. He was nevertheless quickly located by his reception committee, who had been startled to see an agent descend among the containers they were expecting. The leader of the ground party, Gerard Parent, was nevertheless aware that MUSICIAN was expecting a new arrival, albeit via a different route. All was therefore well and Tessier spent the remainder of the night at Parent's farm, near Bohain-en-Vermandois (02), 20 kilometres north-east of Saint-Quentin and known for being the town where the young Henri Matisse had grown up.

On the 11th, Guy Biéler came to the farm to welcome and collect Tessier, taking his new assistant back to where he was then staying, the *Café du Moulin Brûlé* in Omissy (02), a village 5 kilometres north-east of Saint-Quentin and little more than a kilometre from the lock gates at Lesdins. There Biéler reviewed Tessier's documentation and expressed concern at Tessier's forged ration card which was not of adequate quality to be valid. Biéler therefore kept it, pending obtaining a replacement card. Tessier stayed at the café for three days, being introduced to the owners, Monsieur and Madame Tixier, who were fully aware of Biéler's activities, and meeting several other local helpers of the MUSICIAN circuit. He was also introduced to Yolande Beekman, the circuit's radio operator who at that time was living in Saint-Quentin, but was becoming increasingly concerned about German Direction Finding (DF) efforts to locate her. Tessier and Biéler discussed the new directive, to immediately attack the Saint-Quentin canal, that Tessier had brought with him and one of the local men, Arthur, who came to meet Tessier proved to be an employee at the canal and was able to give important information about the target. Tessier had a list of contacts that he had to make and had also brought a number of warning messages for Biéler, these were the messages that Biéler could expect to hear in the run-up to D-Day and which would signal preparatory sabotage attacks and action to be taken once the invasion took place.



The Moulin Brûlé in Omissy. Photo: Café du Moulin Brûlé.

On 13 January, Tessier accompanied Biéler to a meeting on a farm near Fonsommes (02) with two officials who worked on the railway system at Saint-Quentin. It was agreed that Biéler and Tessier would supply them with the explosives necessary to blow up a number of large railway cranes. That night, Biéler explained to Tessier that his circuit had expanded, but his state of health was still not of the best and he was struggling to cover all his geographical area and responsibilities. Due to the back injury he had suffered when parachuting into France, Biéler had spent over four months in hospital and recuperating in Paris before he was able, still in considerable pain and limping badly, to make his way to Saint-Quentin and begin building MUSICIAN. It was partly because of these difficulties that Tessier had been sent to help and Biéler informed him that, in addition to arranging sabotage of the Saint-Quentin canal, he would be given his own area of operations, in the Cambrai and Douai areas.

The same day, a message was received from Yolande Beekman that a suspiciously-bulky looking character, wearing an earphone, had been seen in the street where she was based in Saint-Quentin. The man was suspected of concealing DF equipment under his coat and being part of the Germans' attempts to triangulate Yolande's radio traffic. The man's presence in the street where Yolande transmitted suggested that the enemy was very close to finding her and the decision was therefore made that she should immediately relocate, that evening, to the Café du Moulin Brûlé in Omissy.



A re-enacted scene with a DF van and a photograph showing mobile DF equipment that could be hidden under an overcoat. Photos: author's coll.

On the morning of Friday 14 January 1944, all three MUSICIAN circuit agents were therefore gathered in the café, but Tessier left at 11 a.m. to go to Paris, at Biéler's suggestion, to acclimatise himself with conditions in the capital. He was taking advantage of a trip undertaken by Gerard Parent to visit his fiancée in the city and Tessier stayed at her house, with Parent, over the weekend. While he was in Paris, Tessier met with a man named Ficelle, another of Biéler's helpers, who was also in Paris, but normally lived near Saint-Quentin.

On Monday, 17 January, Tessier returned to Omissy – and disaster at the café. Shortly after Tessier had left for Paris on Friday morning, the Germans had succeeded in pinpointing a transmission by Yolande and burst into the café, guns drawn. Biéler, Yolande and the Tixiers had been immediately arrested. As was their frequent ploy, the Germans then kept the arrests quiet and installed Gestapo agents in the café in order to operate a 'souricière', a 'mouse-trap' to catch other members of the circuit. The plan worked all too well, several other members of the group were captured in addition to Tessier, including Gerard Parent who had likewise returned from Paris and was came to the café to attend a pre-arranged meeting.

Tessier was taken to the Gestapo's headquarters at 8-12 rue Charles Picard in Saint-Quentin, already well-known and feared for its brutal treatment of anyone arrested and held there. Tessier was interrogated for three hours, his hand was broken and he was to later say that he had been on the point of talking, as he thought he could no longer stand the torture to which he was subjected during his questioning. Fortunately, the Germans lost interest in brutalising Tessier, probably as there was little that they still needed to know about such a new arrival in the field. Tessier later reported that he was unable to deny any link with Biéler since Biéler had been found in possession of the ration card in Tessier's false identity name of Paul Terrier, the same name as on the false ID card that Tessier had on him when arrested. If any further proof were needed, Tessier later reported that Yolande Beekman was brought to see him while they were both held at the rue Charles Picard. He said 'The poor girl had been frightened out of her wits' and when she was asked if she recognised Tessier, she said she knew him as *Théodore*.



(L to R) 8, 10 and 12 rue Charles Picard in Saint-Quentin. Photos: author.

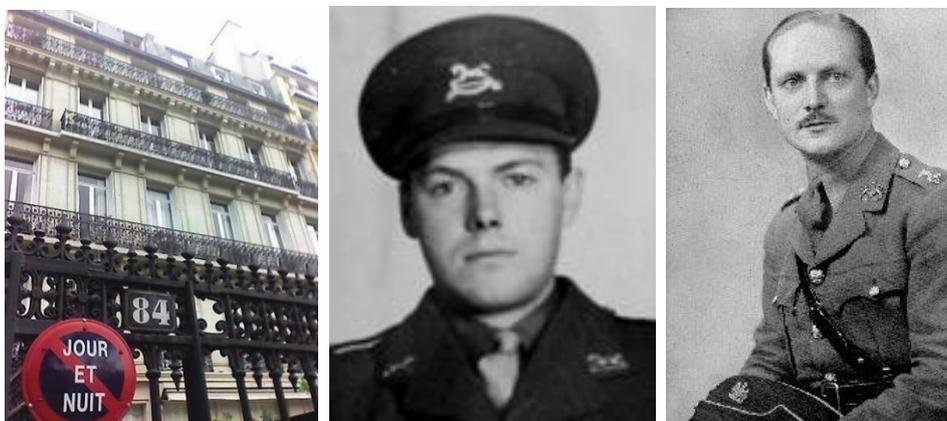
Tessier spent Monday night in captivity with Parent and Yolande Beekman in Saint-Quentin and the next day was transferred, with Yvonne, to 84 avenue Foch in Paris for further interrogation at the headquarters of the *Sicherheitsdienst*. His questioning began the following day, with the suggestion that he should talk freely, since all members of the circuit had been caught. Tessier asked to see Biéler and when they were allowed to meet, he could see that Biéler had been badly beaten – almost certainly during his first interrogation in Saint-Quentin. According to Tessier’s later report, Biéler said:

“Old man, we have had some bad luck, we were caught sending about one hour after you left on Friday. They DF’d us. Most of the organisation is gone. I have made an agreement with the Commandant, or rather he with me, that if I give up arms and explosives, nobody would be touched - if not all taken would be shot. You can please yourself, but as you have been here only a short time you know nothing of the organisation.”

Some forty or so members and helpers of MUSICIAN had quickly been rounded up after the raid on the Moulin Brûlé and the survival of his trusted helpers must have been seemed paramount to Biéler, who had long relied on the loyalty and support of his local recruits. The giving up of arms and explosives in return for the safeguarding of those already arrested would undoubtedly have made sense to an honourable man such as Biéler, especially when the head of the SD at the avenue Foch, Sturmbannführer Kieffer, gave his word, as a fellow officer. It must nevertheless have weighed heavily on Biéler’s conscience for, a week later, Tessier was told that Biéler had asked to be shot.

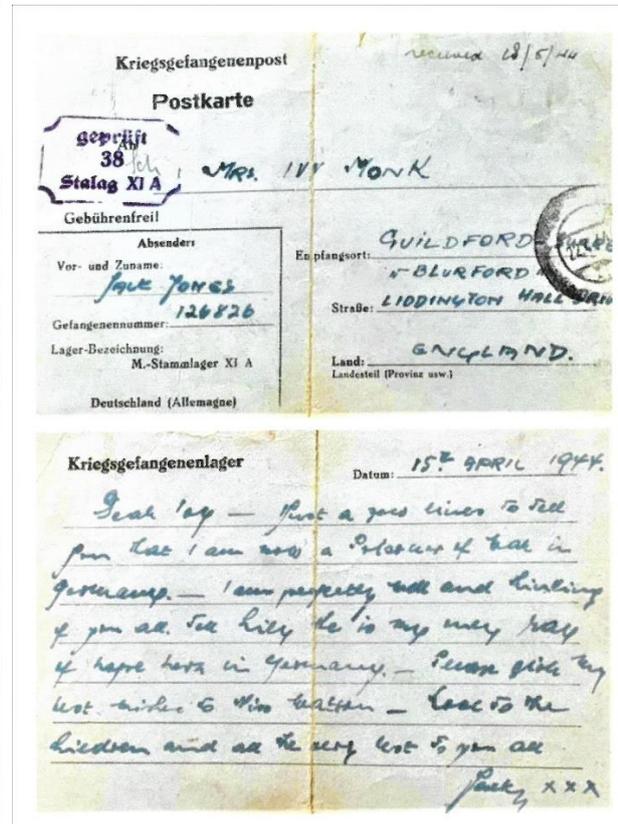
Tessier was also able to speak in captivity at the avenue Foch with Yvonne Beekman who revealed that she had faced a similar demand and dilemma to that of Biéler. The Germans had told her that, unless she revealed her codes, the captured French members of MUSICIAN would be executed and she would be deported to a camp in Germany. Tessier’s report does not give Yolande’s decision, but the Germans were subsequently able to conduct a *Funkspiel*, a radio game, on her set.

Tessier’s interrogation in Paris at the avenue Foch was short, he was not beaten or maltreated while there and described the treatment, and food, as fairly good. He was able to exchange just a few words with other captured agents, including George Clement (DRIVER/*Edouard*) of F Section’s PARSON circuit, captured ten weeks before, and John ‘Bob’ Starr (ACROBAT/*Bob*) who had been at the avenue Foch for five months.^{xi} No further contact was possible with Biéler when the latter was moved to Fresnes prison while Tessier was taken, on 5 February 1944, to 3 bis place des Etats-Unis, a private house converted into 10 holding cells. There, Tessier found it easier to make contact with the other cell occupants. Again remembering his security training, he took pains to first ensure he was not being trapped by a ‘stool pigeon’ and once satisfied, began to memorise his fellow prisoners and communicate with them.



(L to R) 84 avenue Foch, Paris; Lt Georges Clement; Captain John “Bob” Starr.
Photos: author and author’s coll.

In the next cell to him was a British Army commando, Corporal Jack Jones^{xii}, caught on 25 December 1943 while serving in support of OPERATION HARDTACK 11 by Nos. 1 and 8 French Troops of No. 10 (Inter-Allied) Commando. The operation involved a reconnaissance of Gravelines beach, between Calais and Dunkirk. Jones, normally with No. 3 'X' Troop, also informally known as the 'Jewish Troop', was attached as a signaller on the small craft that carried the party and his capture would have been doubly disastrous since not only was he a commando, but he was a Russian-born Jew, true name Vladimir Kottka, serving under an assumed British identity. Fortunately, Kottka managed to conceal his origins and race and was transferred to a normal PoW camp, Stalag XI-A, near Altengrabow in Germany. He was later able to send a guarded message, by means of a standard PoW card, to Paul's sister-in-law, Ivy Monk (sister of Lily), from his PoW camp. He obliquely hinted that he had seen "Ray" (as Paul was known to Lily) when he wrote 'Tell Lily that she is my only ray of hope here in Germany' and he asked that F Section be notified with the sentence 'Please give my best wishes to Miss Watson (i.e. V. Atkins – F Section's Intelligence Officer). Lily notified F Section and provided a copy of the card from Jones (Kottka) to Vera Atkins. Received 18 May 1944, this card from Jones would have been the first indication that Paul had been captured.



3 bis place des Etats-Unis, Paris (photo: author) and the PoW card sent by 'Jack Jones' to Tessier's mother-in-law.

Over the next two months, Tessier managed to communicate with, or learn of, no fewer than 37 agents of F Section at the place des Etats-Unis. In addition to Biéler and Yolande Beekman, and Clement and Starr, to whom he had already spoken, he noted:

Pickersgill, (ARCHDEACON/*Bertrand*) and his radio operator, Macalister (PLUMBER/*Valentin*);
 Suttill (PHYSICIAN/*Prosper*) and his radio operator Norman (BUTCHER/*Archambaud*);
 Sibree (*Morand*), Soskice (*Solvay*), Amphlett (TAXIDERMIST), Demand (STEVEDORE/*Edmonde*) and
 Graham (*Henri*) – all of the SCULLION II *coup de main* operation;
 Bougenec (BUTLER/*Max*) and his radio operator, Rousset (BARBER/*Léopold*);
 Garry (PHONO/*Cinéma*), (his wife Marguerite) and his radio operator Noor Inayat-Khan
 (NURSE/*Madeleine*);
 Vallée (PARSON/*Oscar*) and Gaillot (DEACON/*Ignace*) - for whom Georges Clement was the radio
 operator;
 Levene (LAWYER/*Boniface*);
 Michel (DISPENSER/*Jacques*)
 Defendini (PRIEST/*Jules*);
 Antelme (BRICKLAYER/*Antoine*), his radio operator Lee (MECHANIC/*Thibaud*) and courier Madeleine
 Damerment (DANCER/*Solange*);
 McBain (RHYMER/*Cécil*), Sabourin (SORCEROR/*Léonard*) and Rabinovitch (CATALPHA/*Arnaud*);
 Alexandre (SURVEYOR/*Astre*), Ledoux (ORATOR/*Homère*) and Deniset (MARINER/*Jean-Jacques*);
 Detal (DELEGATE/*Rodrigue*), Duclos (STOCKMAN/*Christian*), Defence (WEAVER/*Dédé*) and Octave
 Simon (SATIRIST/*Badois*);
 Newman (ATLETE, later DIVIDEND/*Pepé*) and Claude Malraux (BEAUPERE/*Cicero*);

Tessier also identified several other Belgian and French agents not connected with F Section. The most critical information he learned concerned the *Funkspiele* that the Germans were playing with the radio sets of several of these agents, namely Norman, Macalister, Rousset, Inayat-Khan, Defence, Defendini Lee and Sabourin and in a brief conversation that he had with one of his fellow-prisoners, Marcel Rousset, it was agreed that each should attempt to escape so that this list of vital information might reach England.

Throughout March and April, Tessier shared his cell with another F Section agent, George McBain (RHYMER/*Cécil*) who was also escape-minded. There had been encouragement when, in mid-March, a French agent escaped, but in late April, McBain was in a group of six F Section agents deported to Germany. Also in this group was Rousset and Tessier was therefore left with sole responsibility for the pledge to try to escape. He was joined in his cell by Sabourin and also, at one time, by two women, *Marie-Louise* and *Suzy*, of the French external military intelligence service, the *Deuxième Bureau*.



(L to R) Captain Marcel Rousset; Pilot Officer George McBain; Lieutenant Roméo Sabourin.
 Photos: Maingard coll. and author's coll.

In an attempt to find the means to escape, Tessier volunteered to sweep the stairs at the place des Etats-Unis, gathering further intelligence from snatched conversation with the other prisoners, including Henri Garry and France Antelme. Tessier later told a *Résistance* chief that he had been allowed the job by feigning memory loss and brain damage, presumably claimed to be a result of his maltreatment while still in Saint-Quentin. Equally important to the information he gathered, Tessier found a nail, a corkscrew and a six-inch piece of metal, all of which he hid in case they might be used to escape.

On 27 May 1944, much to Tessier's surprise, Sabourin was replaced by McBain, brought back from prison in Breslau with four others in an attempt by the Germans to involve them in one of their *Funkspiele*. Tessier and McBain were also moved to a new cell, within which was a locked and disused cupboard, placed against an outside wall. The lock was easily picked and Tessier and McBain realised that they would be able to break through the back of the cupboard and start chiselling through the wall behind, using Tessier's stolen metal implements. They lost no time in starting, disposing of the debris down the toilet, and after 20 days they had breached the wall. McBain's participation in the plot was, however, curtailed when he refused to give his parole not to escape and was kept handcuffed. Why McBain was singled out is not clear, but Tessier was not similarly restrained and was able to continue preparations.

The Normandy invasion of 6 June 1944 produced mixed emotions when it became known in the place des Etats-Unis. On the one hand there was jubilation, but many of the prisoners realised that an Allied advance towards Paris would undoubtedly bring about their deportation to Germany. Rousset, having been one of those temporarily brought back from Breslau, knew better than most what awaited them in Germany. Consequently, on 10 June 1944, while also undertaking cleaning duties, he managed to escape from the building.

As a result of Rousset's escape, all prisoners' participation in cleaning duties and other fatigues was immediately stopped. Tessier, confined to his cell with McBain, realised that time must be running out and he determined to make his 'hole in the wall' attempt soon. McBain, handcuffed, could not accompany him, but helped as much as he could and McBain also gave Tessier the address of a young woman in Paris whom he thought would help.

On 17 June 1944 Tessier pulled off his escape through the hole in the wall. Using knotted-together bed sheets he managed to lower himself from the fourth-floor cell, and enter a neighbouring apartment where an elderly lady agreed to give him a *Métro* ticket. Tessier quickly left and using the ticket went to see McBain's Swedish mother who ran a bar in Paris. Having given her news of her son, Tessier continued to the house of Lucille Rehman, the contact given by McBain, at 34 rue Lantiez of the 17^e *arrondissement*. He found the Rehmann family helpful, but unable to house him as they were Jews in hiding and could be raided at any time. Undoubtedly wanting not to bring them trouble, he used another contact that he had noted while waiting in Lyon to evade after the abortive DRESSMAKER mission, the previous year. While staying with the family who provided the Lyon safe house, Tessier had read a letter from a brother of the householder, condemning the German occupation. The brother was a priest in the Paris suburb of Romainville and remembering this, Tessier set off to walk the nine kilometres there after spending one night with the Rehman family. On arrival, he had no difficulty in finding Monsieur *le curé* Guerde and was able to prove his story by giving a password and showing a Saint Christopher medal, given to him by the priest's sister in Lyon and about which Guerde had heard.

Guerde ran a *local Résistance* group, but he was being watched and quickly allocated his niece the task of finding Tessier somewhere to live. She, in turn, approached Monsieur Chainé of the Romainville *Résistance*. Chainé had been involved before in hiding evaders and took Tessier to meet a nurse, working in Paris, but resident in a house in Lagny-sur-Marne (77), some 30 kilometres to the east of

the centre of Paris. Marguerite Cane, the nurse, held French nationality, but had an English father and was married to Henry Herbert "Bertie" Cane, also English. "Bertie" Cane^{xiii} had an industrial supplies business, but had been imprisoned by the Germans. In his absence, Marguerite had not hesitated to offer use of their home for *Résistance* activities. The Canes' property – the *Villa des Sources* at 13 rue de la Paix, was therefore already in use as a safe house for evaders and Marguerite Cane immediately agreed to house Tessier. Chaine agreed to take Tessier by train to the station of Bondy, where Marguerite would meet them at the end of her working day and then take Tessier on to Lagny. On arrival there, Tessier met two USAAF airmen waiting for the Allied advance to overtake them. He impressed upon everyone the importance of the information he had to get back to England and he was quickly put in touch with Henri Bouteiller, the regional chief of a large *Résistance* group, *Turma-Vengeance*, operating in the Lagny area. Bouteiller, known as *Commandant Albert*, was a mathematics teacher living in Lagny. Described as '*calme et possède un sang froid à tout épreuve*',^{xiv} he immediately agreed to help and his report, held in the SOE archives,^{xv} suggests Tessier's message was relayed to London by three separate means. One of these routes involved one of Bouteiller's lieutenants knowing of the existence of a British circuit still operating in the Paris area and agreeing to introduce Tessier. In return for the support of the *Résistance* group, Tessier pledged to help and offered Bouteiller advice on organising the men, the establishment of safe houses for the operation of radios, and transport. The latter would be needed to carry the arms and sabotage material of which the group was presently sorely lacking, but which Tessier was confident he could arrange to be dropped by the RAF. To that end, he immediately set about reconnoitring DZs in the area.



Villa des Sources, Lagny.

The arrival and help of Tessier was a welcome development for Bouteiller. As head of *Turma-Vengeance* for the north of Seine-et-Marne, with his headquarters at Lagny, he had some 1,600 *résistants* in his organisation by the end of May 1944, but the impetus of the Normandy invasion had seen numbers double after D-Day. On a day-to-day mundane level, he needed funds and or food for his followers. More critically, he was almost totally lacking in arms, ammunition and explosives with which to seal his group's credentials and prevent his men from leaving to join other, more active, networks. Tessier's involvement would at least show the potential of support from London and the sight of a British captain selecting drop zones for use by the RAF must have raised spirits considerably.

When Tessier was taken to meet the organiser of the British network, he found it to be the F Section circuit of Dumont-Guillemet (SPIRITUALIST/*Armand*) and Tessier and Dumont-Guillemet recognised each other from London. Tessier's escape, and his information regarding the radio games played by the Germans, was reported on 27 June 1944 by the PONCHO set of SPIRITUALIST's radio operator, Henry Diacono (PLAYBOY/*Blaise*), who reported that Tessier 'is now working in conjunction with *Armand*'.^{xvi}



(L to R) Major Dumont-Guillemet (pictured with his wife) and Lieutenant Henry Diacono, both of the SPIRITUALIST circuit.
Photos: Michel Dumont-Guillemet via David Harrison and author's coll.

The reality was somewhat different. On 30 June a reply was received from London and must have made crushing reading for Tessier. While he was thanked for his message and information, he was told that, as he was considered '*brûlé*', he was to be dropped immediately and should return to England. The thinking of F Section's staff seems to have been that Tessier was well-known to the Germans and would therefore prove a risk to SPIRITUALIST, Diacono having radioed that Tessier was working with the circuit. But, and despite many references to the contrary in SOE records regarding Tessier and SPIRITUALIST, Tessier was not attached to Dumont-Guillemet's group.

The same day, 30 June, Tessier began a long report^{xvii} for SOE's headquarters in Baker Street, London, giving considerable detail of his arrival in France, his arrest, imprisonment and treatment by the Germans and the extensive list of agents that he had noted at the avenue Foch and place des Etats-Unis. Regarding his present situation, and while acknowledging that he was '*brûlé*', he stressed that he was not in any way under the protection of SPIRITUALIST, but instead had his own organisation – which he reported he had now been asked to lead. He went on to describe his area's groups, including the fact that one element was already losing members to another organisation as it had no arms. Nevertheless, Tessier listed 17 communities, spread across the Seine-et-Marne *département*, with a total of over 3,000 men (numbers later increased to around 7,000), formed into companies, awaiting his orders for action. He described how the different groups could communicate with each other, helped by a network of local short-range radio transmitters created by a wireless expert.

Tessier stressed, in listing all these resources, that he remained under London's orders, presumably wishing to allay any concerns that, by not linking himself with SPIRITUALIST, he had somehow 'gone native'. He asked that, even if he were not permitted to be involved, his groups should receive air drops of the arms they so desperately needed. To prove that his groups were capable of decisive action, he described a recent operation whereby a Town Hall had been raided and stocks of ration books for the month of July were seized. This action was needed to help feed a total of 15 shot-down USAAF aircrew now being hidden and cared for and a supply was given to each company of the

Résistance. 100 examples were included with Tessier's report, with his suggestion that they be copied and some set back so that he could build up a reserve of food.

Tessier was confident that these groups could control the two main railway lines that ran through the region to the east from the capital: Paris to Strasbourg and Paris to Belfort, as well as the lesser lines. All major roads leading east (the expected route of a German withdrawal from Paris) could also be controlled. He confirmed that three potential DZ sites, PAIRE, PECHE and PRUNE, had been found and he gave exact map references for their locations, suggested '*messages personnels*' to be used by the BBC to advise of imminent drops, and a signal letter to be flashed in Morse from the ground. Tessier asked for a radio operator to be dropped to him on PECHE and requested orders, funds, arms and ammunition to be sent. If it were agreed that Tessier could stay and work with his *Résistance* groups, and that arms and material would be dropped, he asked for a message of encouragement to be transmitted by the BBC, but if the answer was to be "no", the message "*Merci pour les cerises*" [Thank you for the cherries] should be sent. Finally, and in keeping with the security-conscious agent that Tessier had always shown himself to be, he expressed the wish to change his field name from *Théodore* to *Christophe*, having already been given a new fake ID card in the name of Paul Leclerc, a business employee.

Neither Dumont-Guillemet's report on his SPIRITUALIST circuit, nor Diacono's personal file^{xviii} mention Tessier, nor any communication with him, but it had been Diacono who reported Tessier's escape and it was recorded by Tessier that a reply to his first message to England was received on 1 July, before he had finished drafting his report. Not surprisingly, the message from London was a reaction to his report of the radio game played on Yolande Beekman's radio set. It asked if Tessier knew about three other agents that had been sent to arrangements made through Beekman's messages and London also requested details of the places in and around Paris known to be holding British agents in captivity. Including his answers in a final paragraph to his written report, Tessier gave a list of five different locations for British agents, adding the comment 'I do not think they shoot any agents, but they do send them to prison in Germany'.^{xix} In respect of the three agents, named as *Colin*, *Tristan* and *Guillaume*, he replied that he knew nothing of them, but that if they had been dropped to a MUSICIAN reception, they would be in the hands of the Gestapo.

Tessier's report, together with a letter to his wife, must have reached England in hard copy as his family still have the letter to Lily. This suggests that it was either flown out (the RAF were still operating clandestine Lysander and Hudson flights into and out of France in July 1944) or (much more slowly) passed via courier through Switzerland. Whichever route it took, no response seems to have been generated from England and Tessier pledged himself to the *Résistance*. Marguerite Cane agreed that he could stay in her house as long as he wished and it was safe to do so. Consequently, Tessier's first journey back into the capital was to obtain some more clothes that would fit him. Without clothing coupons, his purchases had to be through Black Market channels.

Despite the silence from London and no move to commence air drop arms and material to Tessier, the Lagny-centred element of *Turma-Vengeance* succeeded in limited operations. A small supply of explosives, several sub-machine guns and a light machine gun were obtained from the south of the Seine-et-Marne. Tessier, now known as *Capitaine Christophe*, took part in the transportation of the weapons and then commenced training courses on their use. Bouteiller described him as an excellent organiser and trainer and *Turma-Vengeance* then used the explosives to sabotage the Paris-Strasbourg railway line and to cut the telephone cables between Paris and Metz and Paris and

Strasbourg. Tessier's eye for detail, together with his positive attitude and unshakeable belief in an Allied victory, soon won him the approval of his students.

The Villa des Sources soon became what Marguerite Cane described as a 'nerve centre' for the local *Résistance*. Arms, explosives and documents were stored in the property's cellars and two barns and it was said that two radios, one for repair, were held there at one time. One negative experience related to the increasing impatience of the various different *Résistance* groups in Seine-et-Marne as the Allies progressed towards them across France. Many *Résistance* leaders already had one eye on the political future and although all groups were now responsible to a unified military command – the *Forces Françaises de l'Intérieure* (FFI) – petty jealousies came to the surface, much to Tessier's frustration. When confronting one *Résistance* leader over an example of this tension, Tessier forthrightly told him "I'm here to serve the British nation and the victory of the Allied people – not your ridiculous quarrels. You should be ashamed of yourself".^{xx}

Evidence of Tessier's *sang froid* while working for the *Résistance* comes from an account published in 1954 in a local newsletter in Lagny.^{xxi} In July or August 1944, during one of his trips to Paris, Tessier had managed to acquire a sub-machine gun (almost certainly a Sten) which, wrapped up in newspaper, he was bringing back to Lagny. He was in a friend's electric car, but a flat battery caused the car to come to a stop at Neuilly-sur-Marne, still some 17 kilometres from Lagny. With little other option, Tessier resorted to thumbing a lift, but the first vehicle that stopped for him was a German Army lorry. Unable to refuse the driver's offer without raising suspicion, Tessier climbed into the cab and sat between the German and another soldier, nursing his wrapped-up sub-machine gun on his lap until he was gratefully dropped off on the road into Lagny.

Tessier's acceptance by the *résistants* was matched by the continuing support for him from the Cane household. In addition to the evading American airmen, Lilian Rhétit, a friend of Marguerite Cane and also a nurse, was living in the Villa des Sources, with her two young daughters. The younger of the girls, Bernadette, sometimes accompanied Tessier on his lone trips into the capital when he had to liaise with other groups. With Bernadette holding his hand, he seemed like an innocent young father out with his daughter. For playing her part, Bernadette was treated, while they were in Paris, to a cup of hot chocolate. In later years, recalling the red velvet seats of the establishment where she received her reward, Bernadette thought that she might have been taken to the famous Maxim's restaurant. Tessier often talked openly of his family and regretted not being at home to see his younger son, Paul, take his first steps. He became fond of the two Rhétit girls and also of the three children of *Commandant Albert*. When one of Bouteiller's sons had a birthday, Tessier bought teddy bear gifts for all five of the Rhétit and Bouteiller children. He entertained the children and the adults of the house with his many impersonations of Hollywood stars of the era, his best was said to be of Laurel and Hardy. Everyone in the household, from the elderly charlady to the youngest child, liked *Capitaine Christophe*.

After over two months of anticipation, Saturday 26 August 1944 should have been a day of great hope and expectation in Lagny. The day before, German forces in Paris had surrendered to Allied forces led by the Free French *2^e Division Blindée* of Maréchal Leclerc, but as the enemy pulled out of the capital, they were still in the mood for a fight and did not hesitate to take brutal action and reprisals to counter any *Résistance* opposition in their way.

The dangers were only too clear to *Turma-Vengeance*. As Leclerc's tanks had been grinding down the boulevards of Paris to a rapturous reception on the 25th, in Villeneuve-Saint-Denis, just nine

kilometres south-east of Lagny, a German unit retreating from Paris had encountered harassment by the *Résistance* and halted. 11 young *résistants* were captured and, on the orders of the German unit's officer commanding, *Hauptmann* Johan Wirck, were executed. The young men were from several communities in the local area, but almost all were members of the Tournan company of *Turma-Vengeance*.^{xxii}

Despite the continuing presence of German forces in the area, the local *Résistance* was determined to take its part in pushing the enemy out of Lagny. The liberation of Paris had been helped by an insurrection in which between 1,500 and 2,000 *résistants* were killed and it was undoubtedly something of a question of honour for *Résistance* groups beyond the capital to now play their part. American troops were reported to be advancing towards the Marne river, but to help the Americans, (with perhaps the added benefit of ensuring a better turn out in any liberation parade), *Turma-Vengeance* still wanted more arms. No supplies had been arranged by SOE, despite Tessier's planned arrangements and radio messages. The DZs remained unused and London's failure to support the *Résistance* in what was rapidly becoming an area teeming with targets, caused some disillusionment with the British – though not personally with Tessier.

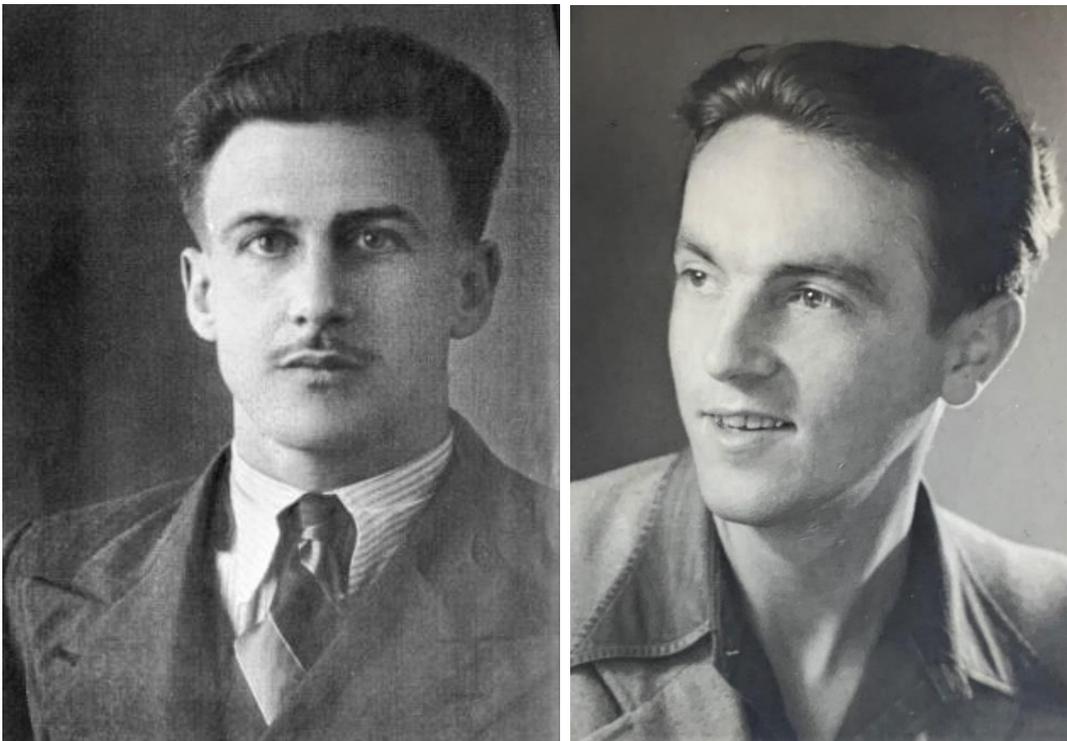
A stock of weapons was, however, now available in Paris and while collecting them meant going through the front lines, the main road route to the capital was thought to have only scattered German units along it and the risk was therefore considered manageable. Initially, Tessier had opposed the need for more weapons, believing that their use would have little or no effect in the coming battles. He was also concerned that action against the retreating Germans, in such a populated area, would immediately bring reprisals against the local people. Several of the *Résistance* group leaders disagreed and remained keen to obtain additional weapons, to the extent that *Commandant Albert* acquiesced and designated one of his most trusted officers, Patrick Auneau (known as *Lieutenant Florent*) to undertake the mission. Auneau had been acting as a lieutenant to Tessier and consequently, when the latter learned of the orders given to Auneau, he decided to accompany him. Marguerite Cane and Lilian Rhétit begged him not to go on what they thought was an unnecessary and ill-advised mission. Tessier himself seems to have been torn between two emotions. On the one hand, he wanted to support Auneau and he was concerned that, if he didn't, British soldiers might be considered cowardly. On the other, he very much wanted to see his family again. As the two women went to the gate of Les Sources to see him off at around 9 a.m. on the 26th, Tessier revealed his own concern when he told them "if something happens, I won't see my boys grow up". Despite this sombre thought, as he walked away and turned the corner of rue de la Paix, Tessier looked back, waved and gave his best Laurel and Hardy imitation of exasperation. The women laughed and waved back.

Out of sight of Villa des Sources, Tessier was picked up by *résistant* Jacques Moreau who had his own car and was to act as driver for the trip. The other passengers were Auneau/*Lieutenant Florent* and another *Résistance* member, Delabouloire. As they set off to collect the arms, along the slightly-circuitous route of Chelles – Montfermeil – Le Raincy – Villemomble – Paris. They knew that Allied forces were already reported to have taken Villemomble and the front line was therefore expected at Le Raincy.

Several accounts survive of the morning's events, the most authoritative, with only minor differences, being those of Marguerite Cane and Henri Bouteiller, *Commandant Albert*. As described by Cane, the car had passed through Chelles and Montfermeil without any problems. But soon after passing the Sept Iles road junction, it passed a group of German soldiers. Initially, there seemed to be no reaction, but the enemy then opened fire from the rear with a hidden machine gun and just after passing a car

bodyshop, the vehicle came to a halt. All four men leapt from the car, but Tessier, already wounded slightly in the thigh, was instantly hit by a burst of machine-gun fire which Cane later described as almost cutting him in two at the waist. Cane went on to say that Tessier died just a few minutes later, propped with his back against a tree against a tree^{xxiii}.

An official account, received from the French authorities and therefore quoted by SOE to the Tessier family, was included in a report from Henri Bouteiller in November 1944. It confirmed Cane's account of the action, but said that the Germans left Tessier to bleed to death for two hours, preventing any local people giving help or water. The latter was not an unknown German tactic [see Cauchi, volume I] and a later newspaper report suggested an agonising death over four hours. The three *résistants* with Tessier managed to flee through neighbouring gardens and, despite Auneau having suffered a bullet wound to his ankle, made their way back to Lagny to break the tragic news.



Tessier (left) photographed for his new identity in Lagny as Paul Leclerc and Patrick Auneau, wounded but survived on 26 August 1944.

Word of the tragedy was in harsh contrast to the radio reports from Paris where, that same afternoon, General de Gaulle made his triumphant march down the Champs Elysées. Reaching the place de la Concorde, he disdainfully ignored the sniper fire of a few die-hard Germans holding out in the city and not accepting the surrender. Marching on, he climbed into a car which was waiting at the other side of the square to take him to a *Te Deum* at Notre Dame cathedral.



De Gaulle's triumphant march in Paris on 26 August 1944 – the same day that Tessier was killed.
Photo: author's coll.

De Gaulle was right to ignore these last desperate acts of the enemy. The last pockets of Nazi soldiers were cleared and the Allies continued their advance to the east of the capital. The next day, American forces entered the town in the afternoon and street fighting ensued, in which several residents were killed. The Germans then withdrew to the north bank of the Marne and blew up their temporary bridge behind them. Tessier had missed taking part in the liberation of Lagny by only some 18 hours.

Similarly to there being several accounts of Tessier's death, there are at least four different versions of who retrieved and looked after his body. Of the three, the most accurate appears to be that of the undertakers used. This states that Tessier's body was taken from the allée de Montfermeil to the nearby local town hall of Clichy-sous-Bois and on the 28th was placed in a coffin, decorated with flowers. Among personal items returned to, and still in the possession of, the Tessier family were his false ID card, a lock of Lily's hair and his fake discharge papers showing him to be a former French PoW. On the 30th, the coffin was first taken to the Eglise Saint Denis in Clichy-sous-Bois for a funeral service and then by convoy to Lagny where, in the military and Résistance plot of the town's cemetery, Tessier was finally laid to rest with full military honours.



The lock of Lily's hair recovered from her husband's body; and Tessier's fake ID card, forged after his escape in Paris.



(L to R) the Eglise Saint Denis in Clichy-sous-Bois (photo: author's coll.) and the funeral procession in Lagny.

Tessier was awarded a Posthumous Mention in Despatches (gazetted in June 1945) by the British, it being noted on his SOE file that, had he survived, he would have been recommended for the DSO. From the French, and as recommended by *Commandant Albert*, he received *Chevalier* of the *Légion d'honneur*, the *Croix de Guerre* and the *Médaille de la Résistance*.

Tessier's tragic death, so near to liberation, was not to be the final act in the story of his service. It is unusual that Tessier's report of 30 June/1 July 1944 was not added to his SOE personal file and that reports by Dumont-Guillemet and Diacono do not mention his activities in Paris from June to August 1944. The presence of Tessier's account in the private papers of Vera Atkins adds to the uncertainty surrounding the situation and leads one to wonder if the sensitivity of the information that Tessier

had sent led to a deliberate decision to withhold his report from the usual filing process. For the high-risk, though understandable, decisions taken by Biéler and (seemingly) Beekman had disastrous consequences while Tessier had been in German hands.

The Germans' deception played out in the *Funkspiel* conducted over Beekman's radio set led to F Section dropping a new, three-man, circuit to a reception committee supposedly organised by Tessier. In reality, a German force awaited the three agents^{xxiv} as they landed by parachute near Saint-Quentin on the night of 2/3 March 1944. All three, circuit leader Lieutenant Maurice Lepage (LIONTAMER/*Colin*), Lieutenant Edmond Lesout, (LENDER/*Tristan*) and Lieutenant David Finlayson (FRIAR/*Guillaume*) were captured and later executed. These were the three agents (Lepage and Lesout were seconded from the OSS) about whom London had quizzed Tessier in a radio message of 1 July 1944 – receiving the answer that he had no knowledge of them, but that if they had been dropped to a supposed MUSICIAN reception, then they would have been captured by the Germans. Tessier had been right.



(L to R) Lieutenant Lepage; Lieutenant Lesout and Lieutenant Finlayson of the doomed LIONTAMER team.
Photos: Lepage and Finlayson families and US Archives, NARA.

Tessier's SOE file includes several messages that were passed on to his wife by Baker Street: on 1 February 1944, with the good news of Tessier's safe arrival 'at his destination'; on 20 February 1944; on 28 March 1944 (with mention of Lily's birthday on the 31st; and on 11 April 1944 (with much love for his eldest son, Roger, for his forthcoming birthday on 13 April). The remarkable thing about all these messages is that they were sent during Tessier's captivity – suggesting two possible explanations. Firstly, that they were an integral element of the *Funkspiel* being played by the Germans on Yolande Beekman's radio set and that neither SOE nor Lily held any suspicion that they were not genuine as the dates of birthdays were correct. Since Biéler had given Tessier the option of talking, (given that Tessier had only just arrived, knew little, and Biéler had already decided to give up the circuit's arms dumps), revealing the birth dates of his wife and sons might have seemed completely innocuous to Tessier, and one can imagine that the information was perhaps asked for on some form of PoW form. The other potential explanation is that Tessier had prepared these messages, to be sent to his wife by SOE HQ in London while he was in the field, subject to his being at liberty and in good health. Thanks to the *Funkspiel*, HQ would have been unaware of Tessier's capture and would have sent the positive messages in good faith.

Given Tessier's strong sense of security, commented upon during his training, it is unlikely that he gave any personal information to his captors. Even had he done so, it would have been a risk for the

Germans to use it in their *Funkspiel* as it would have been a simple matter for Tessier to give wrong dates and thereby alert London to there being something amiss. The likelihood is therefore that the messages were generated by F Section's staff. They are similar in tone and content to the messages sent to the families of other F Section agents in the field, even if, as in the case of Tessier, it was not known that the agent had been captured.^{xxv}

Yet another consequence of the Germans learning details of the MUSICIAN circuit and its radio messages was their rapid insertion of a double agent, known as '*Clothaire*' into F Section's operations in Paris. Jacques Weil, second-in-command of the JUGGLER circuit and fiancé of the circuit's courier, Sonia Olschanezky,^{xxvi} later reported^{xxvii} that on or around 22 January, this so-called 'false *Clothaire*' introduced himself in Paris to members of JUGGLER, claiming to be an agent recently sent from London to replace Biéler in the MUSICIAN circuit. Given that Tessier was the only agent to have been sent to MUSICIAN and his arrival, reported to have been notified to JUGGLER as well as MUSICIAN, had been recent, there is a strong possibility that the double agent was impersonating Tessier, but using a different field name – *Clothaire*, rather than *Théodore*.^{xxviii} The imposter knew the required password, personal details about Biéler and Yolande Beekman (including something about the latter's lipstick) and was able to convince both Louis Fuhrer (another JUGGLER helper) and Sonia Olschanezky of his credentials. Both were subsequently arrested and although Fuhrer survived a concentration camp, Olschanezky (treated as a captured British agent despite her lack of formal status and/or training) was executed at Natzweiler concentration camp, together with Andrée Borrel, Vera Leigh and Diana Rowden.



Sonia Olschanezky – victim of the 'false *Clothaire*'.
Photo: author's coll.

Tessier's escape on 17 June 1944 seems not to have been notified to his wife until 17 August 1944 when, just nine days before his death, Lily received a letter from SOE giving her the positive news that 'your husband is again among friends'. Worse was to follow. In the demands of a continuing Allied campaign across France, Lily was not informed of Tessier's death on 26 August 1944, nor of his burial on the 30th. To the contrary, she first received a letter from Major Mackenzie of SOE on 8 September 1944. Mackenzie repeated that Tessier was 'again with friends' and enclosed a handwritten note to Lily from Tessier – which must have been written some time before. Lily and Tessier's family, knowing of the liberation of almost all of France, must have had the highest possible expectation that Tessier had survived. When news of his death subsequently arrived, it would have been doubly shocking.

Further evidence of administrative delays comes from the fact that it was not until 24 January 1945 that formal notification was given of Tessier's having been killed in action. Lily did not receive official notice of her husband's burial and grave location until 28 June 1947 and only in July 1948 was a poor-quality photo and letter sent.



Tessier's original gravestone and the later one, paid for by the community in Lagny, seen here with Tessier's younger son, also Paul Tessier.

To review Tessier's service with hindsight, it can be seen to have been blighted by circumstances beyond his own control. OPERATION DRESSMAKER was woefully undermined by poor intelligence and vague planning by Baker Street. Only the efficient operation of SOE's VIC escape line, run by DF Section, saved the day, coupled with the four agents' resourcefulness. When joining MUSICIAN, Tessier had pure bad luck, arriving just three days before his circuit leader and radio operator were caught and remaining at liberty only three days more before he, too, was arrested. His most positive contribution therefore comes from the period of his escape until his death. The determination of both Tessier and Rousset to escape and report back to London on the captured agents, and the radio games being played by the Germans, showed the highest possible commitment. Both men succeeded and both served with the Résistance during the liberation of Paris region. Rousset was unable to get information back to England, but served valiantly in the fighting in Paris and was awarded a well-served Military Cross (MC). Tessier served no less bravely, in the face of indifference from London, and managed to have his vital information transmitted back to England via F Section's SPIRITUALIST circuit. But Tessier was subsequently killed and was therefore eligible only for a posthumous award. An MC, as was awarded to Rousset, would have been appropriate, but SOE acknowledged that, had he survived, Tessier would have been recommended for the award of the Distinguished Service Order (DSO). The DSO is a higher decoration than the MC and typically awarded to the rank of Major and above. Had Tessier survived, he would almost certainly have also received a promotion to Major.

The information that Tessier had radioed back to England was vital, but part of it was already outdated, thanks to the intervention of no less than Adolf Hitler. As the Normandy invasion progressed on 6 June 1944, 11 days before Tessier's escape, Hitler issued a remarkable order from Berlin. Having taken a personal interest in the Funkspiele conducted against the British, he decided that revealing the Gestapo's success in conducting the radio games could seriously undermine the Allies' confidence in

the ability of the *Résistance* to help them. Hitler thought that the crucial moment would be the day of the invasion and the Gestapo in Paris reluctantly transmitted to F Section at noon on 6 June 1944:

‘Many thanks large deliveries arms and ammunition.....have greatly appreciated good tips concerning your intentions and plans’.^{xxix}

The dismay of the Paris Gestapo at having to send this message was deepened when, later in the day, another message was received from Berlin, ordering the message NOT to be sent, after Goëring had belatedly persuaded Hitler that there was still advantage to be gained from running the Funkspiele. It was too late and F Section had confirmation of how extensively they had been tricked.

What was, nevertheless, still important was the detail that Tessier provided on the agents in captivity. Many of these were not definitely known to be in German hands and the fact that they were still alive, together with Tessier’s reporting of the type of agreement put to Biéler and Beekman, offered hope that the captured agents might yet be treated as PoWs and survive. The reality was sadly different. Of the 37 agents of F Section identified by Tessier only two, Rousset and John “Bob” Starr, survived. The others died or were killed in concentration camps. Guy Biéler was shot at Flossenbürg on 5 September 1944 and Yolande Beekman at Dachau, eight days later. With Tessier’s death in action, all three members have MUSICIAN had been killed.

A tangential, but positive, outcome from Tessier’s service in France came from one of the two Allied airmen who were being harboured by Marguerite Cane in Lagny when Tessier had arrived. Lieutenant (later Captain) Walter “Joe” Kozicki was a pilot with the USAAF’s 374th Fighter Squadron, 361st Fighter Group of the 8th Air Force. Operating from RAF Bottisham in Cambridgeshire, Kozicki had been shot down in his P-51B Mustang while acting as fighter escort for a bombing mission on 4th June 1944. After the liberation of France had reached Lagny, Kozicki had returned to England and made sure to visit the Tessier family. He thereby met and dated Tessier’s younger sister, Denise. In 1946 Denise followed Joe back to the USA where they subsequently married and settled.



Joe Kozicki and (right – author’s coll.) a P-51B Mustang of the 374th Fighter Squadron, similar to that flown by Kozicki, at RAF Bottisham in 1944.

In relation to commemoration of Captain Paul Tessier, there is much to ensure that Tessier is not forgotten in Lagny. His name is included with four *Résistance* members listed on a plaque in the town hall and in September 1954 the town council renamed the Place Publique as the Square Paul Tessier,

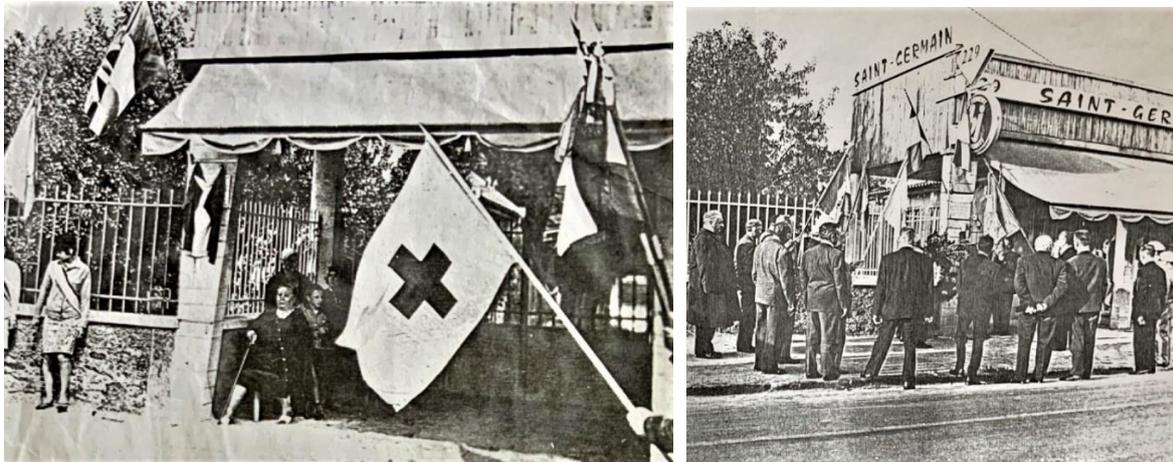
with a commemorative stone. A plaque on a wall of the *Villa des Sources*, home of the Canes, commemorates Tessier living there from 16 June [sic – Tessier’s own accounts suggest it should be 18 June] after his escape until his death.



And in 1994 the town of Lagny struck a commemorative medal to mark the 50th anniversary of Tessier’s death.



In Clichy-sous-Bois, 229 allée de Montfermeil, the spot where Tessier was claimed to have died [see endnote xxiii], still has the commemorative plaque unveiled there in 1967.



The unveiling at 229 allée de Montfermeil, Clichy-sous-Bois, in 1967.



The plaque at 229 allée de Montfermeil: (left) in 1967 and on the right of today's Turkish café.

Sources: Tessier's SOE personal file is (TNA) HS9/1453/2; the report on OPERATION DRESSMAKER is (TNA) HS6/353 and the other three participants in the operation have (TNA) personal files at: Georges Larcher HS9/887/8; Eskenazi HS9/485/4 and Cunningham HS9/382/8. Tessier's report back to London, sent after his escape from German captivity in Paris, is in the private papers of Vera Atkins, held in the archives of the Imperial War Museum (IWM) in London, ref. Documents 12636. The IWM holds the 1990 interview of Sgt Charles Birch who evaded across the Pyrenees in the same group as Tessier and Eskenazi, IWM Sound Archive ref. 11717. The Tessier family maintain a Facebook site dedicated to Paul Tessier - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1883259491975947/?ref=share> and their own extensive collection of reports, articles and photographs was generously made available to the author. The Musée Gatién-Bonnet in Lagny holds a number of local press cuttings and the reminiscences of Marguerite Cane.

Additional information was contributed by Trevor Butterworth, Carol Browne, Andy Brittain, Steven Kippax, Willem Mugge, Pierre Tillet, Martin Sugarman, Nick Fox and Francis J. Suttill.

Photographs are courtesy of the Tessier family, unless otherwise credited.

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Notes:

ⁱ The ISRB, Inter-Services Research Bureau, was a cover title for SOE.

ⁱⁱ 27, or '27-land' referred to France.

ⁱⁱⁱ Party 27Y had at least eight trainee agents, only four of whom – Tessier, Cauchi, Eliane Plewman and Diana Rowden – were despatched to France. None returned.

^{iv} Though details of the composition of HOUSEKEEPER have not survived, Tessier's probable involvement comes from his attendance at STS 2, his later recognition of Captain Dormer, and Tessier's being chosen for his second mission which specified the same target.

^v Oddly, Eskenazi's codename and field name have been redacted on his file, HS9/485/4 In the UK National Archives. Despite this, he is referred to by the codename FINANCIER further on in his file, but his field name remains unknown.

^{vi} The VIC line was so-called after its founder, (Haim) Victor Gerson (TROPICAL/*René*) a highly-successful agent of SOE's DF Section

^{vii} Captain Hugh Dormer, Irish Guards and F Section SOE, was awarded the DSO on returning to Britain, in recognition of his leadership of the SCULLION II mission which succeeded in damaging the shale oil refinery at Autan. Dormer subsequently returned to the Irish Guards in January 1944 after declining further work with F Section. He was a troop leader of No. 2 Tank Squadron of the 2nd Armoured Battalion of the Irish Guards in the D-Day landings. On 1 August 1944, while taking part in an armoured attack east of Caen, he was killed when German anti-tank guns hit his tank.

^{viii} Tessier's wife, Lily, received a letter from the War Office on 27 September 1943, informing her that news had been received of Paul (presumably from the British authorities in Spain) and that he was very well.

^{ix} Larcher may also have been emboldened by having already determined to leave F Section. He applied for transfer to another unit, had a successful interview for the Commandos and subsequently served in the Far East where he won a Military Cross.

^x In response to Larcher's criticisms (all of which, to this author, seem reasonable) Buckmaster added the note: 'On his return, Larcher made many criticisms which were quite unacceptable' and in his summary of Larcher's service wrote 'Not his fault [SCULLION 1], but the next one [DRESSMAKER B] was. Would NOT re-employ' (Ref: HS9/887-8, PF Georges Larcher). Buckmaster made no reference to the faulty intelligence, lack of specific targets and the fact that almost all the potential targets proved to be disused factories.

^{xi} Starr survived imprisonment and concentration camp and was later the subject of an investigation into his activities at the avenue Foch where many accused him of helping the Germans, See Bibliography for 'The Starr Affair' by Jean Overton Fuller.

^{xii} Jones was later able to send a guarded message to Lily, Paul's wife, from his PoW camp, saying that he had seen Paul in captivity. Lily notified F Section and provided a copy of the card from Jones to Vera Atkins, Intelligence Officer of F Section.

^{xiii} Several accounts erroneously describe Bertie Cane as an Englishwoman.

^{xiv} See [https://lagny-sur-marne.wiki/lsm/Henri Bouteiller](https://lagny-sur-marne.wiki/lsm/Henri_Bouteiller)

^{xv} File ref. TNA HS6/560 via T. Butterworth.

^{xvi} Tessier PF ref. TNA HS9/1453/2.

^{xvii} This report by Tessier was not placed on his SOE Personal File. A copy came to light among the private papers of Vera Atkins, placed in the Imperial War Museum (IWM) archives after her death in 2000.

^{xviii} Dumont-Guillemet's personal file is missing from the National Archives, but his circuit report for SPIRITUALIST is ref. TNA HS6/650. Diacono's personal file is ref. TNA HS9/430/1.

^{xix} It was to be another year before it was confirmed how tragically mistaken Tessier had been in this belief. Of the 37 F Section agents he reported, 35 were subsequently executed. Only Marcel Rouseet (escaped) and John Starr (returned from concentration camp) survived.

^{xx} Marguerite Cane reminiscences, 'Relation About the 3 Months' [*sic*] copy with Tessier family and Musée Gatién-Bonnet.

^{xxi} 'Lagny 54', edition of September 1954.

^{xxii} See: <http://museedelaresistanceenligne.org>

^{xxiii} A plaque was unveiled in 1967 on the 'Saint-Germain' café of Madame Jamy at 229 allée de Montfermeil, Clichy-sous-Bois – the spot where Tessier was said to have died. The plaque lists his death as having been on 27 August 1944. The official French death certificate confirms, however, that Tessier's death was recorded around 10 a.m. on the 26th and the location was shown as 207 allée de Montfermeil. Both locations are today Turkish cuisine establishments.

^{xxiv} Given that the operation to drop the LIONTAMER team was codenamed MUSICIAN 12 and Tessier's arrival was MUSICIAN 2, it would seem that in the intervening six weeks, no fewer than 10 drops of arms, explosives, supplies and money had been made to the enemy.

^{xxv} Similar "all is well" messages were sent to the wife of captured Major Richard Pinder of F Section. Source: Caroline Cracraft (daughter).

^{xxvi} Also written as Olschanesky, but Olschanezky is the family's preference.

^{xxvii} ref HS9/1569/9.

^{xxviii} It is likely that the man used by the Germans for this subterfuge was Pierre Cartaud, a former Résistance helper who had been captured and, turned, had agreed to work as a double agent. He was also involved in the capture of Noor Inayat-Khan of the PHONO circuit.

^{xxix} p347, official history 'SOE in France', 1966 M R D Foot.

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