

field with soldiers. They seemed to be everywhere I looked and everyone of them appeared to be carrying a gun. So, my last words to my crew members as I came in for the landing were, "We are landing in Switzerland, but go out of this plane with your hands in the air! I see soldiers everywhere I look and they all have guns! We are landing in Switzerland, but go out of this plane with your hands in the air!"

The Swiss had indeed ringed the airfield with soldiers, almost to their peril, for, if we hadn't been able to stop, we would have rolled over some of them. It is my recollection that two armored cars raced next to us as we came in for the landing, but they might have been ambulances or open cars with more soldiers~ At any rate, I used up every bit of that

grass field to get the plane down and we rolled right up to an edge where armed Swiss soldiers stood their ground.

Everyone in our crew did as he was instructed. From the cockpit, as Rich struck the cap of his incendiary on the control column, I began to work my way out of the side window with mine. One of the Swiss soldiers standing just below me began shouting something at me. Since I understood neither German or the German-Swiss dialect, I had no idea what he was trying to tell me. But I suddenly realized that I would look silly trying to set a bomb off on the wing while he was pointing a gun at me from ten feet away. So I decided I would do better to set my bomb off in the cockpit, too. After doing so, I exited the plane by way of the bottom escape hatch. As it turned out, none of those R.A.F. incendiaries worked. They all proved to be duds.

But then, as it also turned out, I was told by a U.S. military attache in Switzerland that the Army had changed policy and didn't want the planes destroyed after all. It was at this time that we personally met Captain von Meiss. He took us all to the officers club where they gave us coffee and sandwiches. A very pleasant and urbane man, von Meiss's friendly reception has remained in my mind through all of the years since we landed at Magadino. But there was one aspect of my relations with the first Swiss officers whom I met that caused me some dismay. It had nothing to do with them. It had to do with me. During my Army training, we had been told many times to say nothing

of a military nature to an enemy or a stranger. In Switzerland I followed those instructions to the letter even though I sometimes hated to do it. All of the Swiss officers whom I initially met were most cordial, but duty dictated that I could tell them nothing about our plane nor our mission until I'd spoken to a U.S. military attache in their country. At Magadino the Swiss must have thought it humorous when my crew members and I insisted on calling ourselves "tourists."

From Magadino's air- to the town

field we were taken under guard of Bellinzona where we spent the night on the third floor of an empty school. The next morning we were taken by train to the military airport of Dubendorf, near Zurich. There I was interrogated by more Swiss pilots. They were friendly and understood my reluctance to talk about my experience with the 8th Air Force. The following day three officers escorted me out to where an undamaged B-17 was standing on the tarmac. They had me go inside this plane and asked me to show them how to start it. I told them I couldn't do that. But I felt a little ridiculous when they started the engines themselves without any help from me.

The only untoward incident that I experienced in my first days in Switzerland occurred when we were taken from Zurich

to Berne. There, in one of the government buildings, I was taken into the office of a Swiss Army colonel who headed, I was informed, their office of military intelligence. I don't remember his name but I do remember he was tall and austere. He said nothing to me when I entered his office but motioned me to a chair in front of his desk. He then asked me to describe to him our mission to Stuttgart. Once more I started my usual demurral, "I'm sorry, Sir, but until I meet an American military officer here in Switzerland, I can tell you nothing about..." At this, he surprised me and flew into a rage. Picking up a sheaf of Swiss newspapers from his desk, he began shouting at me. "What do you mean you can't tell the Swiss military intelligence anything about your mission!" Then, gesturing with the newspapers, "It seems you people are perfectly willing to talk to news reporters!"

