

RETURNED ACE SAYS ALLIED AIRMEN DELIBERATELY SHOT

Squadron Leader Boulton in Camp At Time Ill-Fated Break Was Made

Ottawa, June 26.—(CP)—Sqdn.-Ldr. F. H. Boulton, D.F.C., of Coleman, Alta., one of a group of repatriated R.C. A.F. personnel, said yesterday that 50 Allied flyers were "deliberately shot" after the mass break from the German prisoner of war camp Stalag Luft 111. Six Canadian airmen were among those shot.

Ridiculous Claim

Sqdn.-Ldr. Boulton, a prisoner in the camp at the time the break was made, said the claim that a second attempt to escape was made was "ridiculous and impossible."

"The men were exhausted when recaptured and they were in Gorlitz prison, one of the most closely-guarded spots in Germany," he added. Boulton was shot down over Amiens while leading a Spitfire squadron protecting Flying Fortresses on a bombing flight over Germany.

He suffered serious head wounds and after treatment in two German hospitals was removed to Stalag Luft III and placed in the east compound with some 1,400 prisoners. It was from this compound that the mass escape was made.

"I knew all the fellows in the escape attempt," Boulton said. "The six Canadians who were shot were particular friends of mine. There were some 6,000 prisoners in the camp, including Canadian, British and United States airmen. About 400 Canadian officers were prisoners there. In all there are some 1,200 Canadian air force officers prisoners in Germany. Many are also at Stalag Luft I on the Baltic coast."

He said the break from Stalag Luft III was "well planned" and that the participants worked on it for 16 months before they were finally ready, braving "most elaborate" guard precautions in the attempt to get away.

Gestapo Action

"Eighty prisoners went out. Four of them were recaptured almost at once. The others got away. The Germans turned more than 2,000 guards out to search the countryside; the air was full of radio instructions.

"Finally a group was recaptured and removed to Gestapo headquarters near Dresden. They were interrogated for hours. Then came the word that 47 of the boys had been shot. It's nonsense to say it was a second attempt to escape. It is impossible and no one would have tried it.

"... Guards were doubled around our camp. We were locked in our huts at 7.15 nightly. Guards with dogs patrolled the wire. Finally the German commandant told Group Capt. H. M. Massey, commandant, of the shooting.

"Even he seemed to know it was deliberate, for he told Group Capt. Massey it was a Gestapo action and the German air force would take no responsibility for it. The German army and air force themselves are in terror of the Gestapo.

"Our men were deliberately shot. There is no doubt about it in my mind and there was no doubt in the minds of other men in the prison camp. Perhaps the Gestapo did it to impose fear on added escape attempts. But it was deliberate and it was murder."

149
WAR
EUROPEAN
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GERMANY
PRISONERS