

noted that Ike's order instructed Miller to leave on an ATC aircraft, *not* a US Service Command Norseman which is listed on the MAR.

The MAR had to be compiled in triplicate within 48 hours of the time an aircrew member was officially reported missing but it is dated 23 December a full eight days after the loss of Morgan's aircraft. The delay could have been caused by the need to identify Morgan's passengers. The MAR seems to indicate this as it is typed using two typewriters, with Baesell and Miller's names added later, and an extract that followed listed all three names in the same type. On a more sinister note, could the delay have arisen because Morgan's UC-64 conveniently disappeared near the time Miller was 'lost' on another adventure and, to avoid any 'official embarrassment' over Miller, HQ added Baesell and Miller's names to Morgan's MAR and told the world that all three were on the same flight?

Baesell has become a very effective fall guy as the man who offered Miller what was (especially in view of Eisenhower's order of 12 December), an unauthorized 'lift'. However, some weeks before, in November in fact, Baesell and Miller had already decided how they would fly to Paris. Baesell intended to use Lieutenant (later Lieutenant-Colonel) George W. Ferguson, a test pilot and engineering officer of the Strategic Air Depot at Wattisham. Ferguson first heard of his selection at B52 in Brussels in November. He recalls, 'Baesell came over with General Goodrich. Baesell mentioned to me that the Miller band would be opening in Paris on Christmas Eve. He and Glenn were coming over a week ahead of time so he could show him Paris. He wanted me to be the pilot. I said I would be pleased to do it but I had to get permission because I had a new commander, Colonel O'Connell. Baesell said Goodrich would approve anything.' - (Early in December Goodrich returned to the USA due to failing health. He died of a heart ailment on 12 July 1945 at the Army Air Force hospital at Maxwell Field, Alabama at the age of only fifty.)

Ferguson, who had served under Baesell in the USA, had already flown him to Paris in August and to the continent on two other occasions. Ferguson recalls, (3) 'Baesell was a very profane individual; every third or fourth word would be a four letter word. He was also a braggadocio, a very loud individual who you could hear for blocks; a military bigot. He had been a plantation owner or plantation manager and

loved to push blacks around. He didn't speak softly but carried a big stick. Apparently, he came from a money group because we got talking one time about blacks and he said they had their place. He accused me on many occasions with his favorite expression, "What do you want to do, live for ever?".'

'Baesell usually sat up front in the co-pilot's seat. On our third flight to the continent I made him wear a Mae West. He hated that. In fact he would loosen the Mae West and parachute but would have it close to him when we crossed the Channel. Over land he would put the Mae West back in the baggage compartment in the tail. This last time crossing the Channel going to England, I suddenly remembered the Mae West and of course nobody could get to them. He looked over and asked what about the Mae West? I said, "Well I hope we're going to live forever Colonel.".'

Lieutenant-Colonel (later Brigadier-General) Richard E. Fisher, Engineer, VIII AFSC, who was at Milton Ernest early in December 1944, recalls: 'I spent some time with Glenn Miller at our little Officers' Club at Milton Ernest. He mentioned that he wanted to see Paris and that he might soon have a chance to fly there. He did not say how he intended to do that. If he had, I would have talked him out of having anything to do with the CO of Milton Ernest Station complement [Baesell].'

Early in December George Ferguson met Glenn Miller and Baesell in the hallway at Milton Ernest. Baesell introduced Ferguson to Miller as the pilot who would be flying them to Paris. However, fate later intervened, as Ferguson recalls: 'Baesell called me on the military network in Zaventon, a mile from B52 (now Melsbroek International) and said, "Copy this Ferguson. I want you over here at such and such a time and so forth." I said I still hadn't got my commander's approval. Two days later I said it was doubtful but I did get the tacit approval of my commanding officer, Colonel O'Connell. Basically, it would have to be a one day mission, get them aboard, fly them to Paris and fly back to Brussels. O'Connell didn't want me away any length of time and would not let me go the day before. It had to be all in the one day.'

The morning of 15 December dawned shrouded in fog and swirling mist around Milton Ernest Hall. Ferguson recalls that the weather in Brussels was worse. 'The fog was down around your socks, it was so bad. There was a 1,500 ft. ceiling. The weather

was still good in England but bad in Villacoubly, Baesell's destination. The continent was more socked in than England. I thought Baesell was aware of the weather situation so he would just be sitting it out. But the field phone rang at about 08.30 in the morning. Baesell said, "Ferguson, where the Goddammed Hell are you?"

'I said "I'm in Brussels."

'He told me to "get my butt over there right away."

'I said, "We couldn't possibly take off. I asked him what the weather was like over there.

'He said, "Fine."

'I said, "You know me well enough that as soon as I can take off with an alternate that I can get into I would try to get off."

He said, "Hurry up, what do you want to do, live forever?" and hung up.'

It was about 09.30 hours when Ferguson received another telephone call from Baesell. 'He was getting more profane. I said the weather had not yet broken.

'He said "What do you want to do, live forever?"

'I can remember saying to him, "Please wait for me. Will you do that please, Sir?"

"Well, OK but you'd better get over here."

'He seemed to want to go that day come hell or high water. Then his final comments were his familiar, "What do you want to do, live forever?" He hung up. It was the last I ever heard from him.'

George Ferguson's reluctance to fly over from Belgium and pick up Baesell did not appear to thwart the Colonel's plans to press on to Paris. It was indeed fortuitous that another Norseman was going to France. It would appear that Baesell simply 'rusted' up another UC-64 from Abbots Ripton. The pilot was 'Nipper' Morgan who just happened on 15 December to be flying to Bordeaux via A-42 (Villacoubly, near Paris).

Victor Stillwell recalls: 'Miller left the house between 9.00 am and 10.00 am. He said to me, "I'm going off on a little trip with Colonel Baesell, I may be back tonight. I shall certainly be back tomorrow." He looked quite cheerful. He and Baesell climbed into a jeep and their driver drove them off to Twinwoods.'

Dixie Clerke, a WAAF in the RAF control tower that day, saw Miller board a Norseman and take-off with a total of four people in the aircraft. The last contact she had was that the aircraft had landed at Bovingdon, an 8th Air Force Service