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**Explorateurs, femmes et hommes de science :
voyages en terres mal connues**

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Buste de László Almásy
dans le jardin du musée de
la Géographie Hongroise
(œuvre du sculpteur Béla
Domonkos).

The world-famous desert researcher, geographic explorer László Almásy, who explored the last white spots in the Sahara. “The English patient”

János Kubassek¹, János Puskás², Gábor Tóth², Tibor Lenner²

Abstract/Résumé/Összefoglaló

After the success of the English Patient, there is almost no person interested in geography who would not have heard about László Almásy. The film introduces a particularly adventurous life that is due to the period in which he lived. He belongs to the generation who has lived both World Wars as an adult, so his life can serve as a source of adventure for filmmakers and writers. It is not easy to answer the question of who was actually László Almásy, a cartographer, an explorer, a geographer, a researcher or even a soldier, a spy, or a writer. But we could still mention him as a pilot and a racing driver. Perhaps all of this, but certainly he was always interested in what was new, unknown and challenging during the period. In our study, we mainly present Almásy as a geographer and explorer. In the meantime, we will also take a break from the adventures that followed his discoveries.

Le géographe mondialement connu László Almásy, découvreur des dernières taches blanches du Sahara. « Le patient anglais »

Grâce au succès du Patient anglais, aucune personne intéressée par la géographie n'aurait pu nier avoir entendu parler de László Almásy. Le film présente une vie particulièrement aventureuse liée à la période dans laquelle il a vécu. Il appartient à la génération qui a vécu les deux guerres mondiales à l'âge adulte. Sa vie peut donc être une source d'inspiration pour les cinéastes et les écrivains. Il n'est pas facile de répondre à la question de savoir qui était réellement László Almásy, cartographe, explorateur, géographe, chercheur ou encore soldat, espion ou écrivain. On pourrait aussi le ranger dans la catégorie des pilotes et même celle des pilotes de course. Il était peut-être tout cela en même temps, mais ce qui est certain, c'est que tout au long de sa vie, il s'est toujours intéressé à la nouveauté, à l'inconnu. Dans notre étude, nous présentons principalement Almásy en tant que géographe et explorateur. Toutefois, notre étude nous amènera également à parler de ses aventures et découvertes.

A világhírű magyar felfedező és geográfus Almásy László, a Szahara fehér foltjainak feltárója. “Az angol beteg”

Az angol beteg című film világsikere után szinte nincs olyan földrajz iránt érdeklődő ember, aki ne hallott volna még Almásy Lászlóról. A film bemutatja különösen kalandos életét, mely nagymértékben köszönhető annak a korszaknak is amelyben élt. Ahhoz a generációhoz tartozik, akik felnőttként érték meg mindkét világháborút, így élete a kalandok kimeríthetetlen forrásaként szolgálhat filmesek, írók számára. Nem könnyű választ adni arra a kérdésre, hogy ki volt valójában Almásy László. Térképész, felfedező, geográfus, kutató vagy akár katona, kém, vagy éppen író. De még pilótaként és autóversenyzőként is megemlíthetnénk. Talán mindez együtt, de az biztos hogy mindig az érdekelte, ami újat, ismeretlen és kihívást hordozott a korszakban. Mi tanulmányunkban elsősorban Almásyt, mint geográfust és felfedezőt mutatjuk be. Közben kitérőt teszünk a felfedezéseit átszövő kisebb kalandokra is

Key-words/Mots clés/Kulcsszavak

Libya, “English patient”, African Research, Oasis of Zarzura, Gilf-Kebir, Africa Korps.

Libye, « patient anglais », Recherches africaines, Oasis de Zarzura, Gilf-Kebir, Africa Korps.

Líbia, “Angol beteg”, Afrika kutató, Zarzura oázis, Gilf-Kebír, Afrika Korps.

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Introduction

The most well-known Hungarian geographic explorer and explorer in Africa have become known worldwide. Following the success of the English Patient film, his researches got into the focus of interest especially in the German and the English language areas. The Haymon-Verlag published a selection from his works in Innsbruck (Austria), and its title was floating in the desert.

In the English language area, the most prestigious London publisher John Murray has published the book of Saul Kelly: The Hunt for Zarzura.

More than a decade has passed since the US Academy of Film gave 9 Oscar Awards for the English Patient. The main character in the film is the Hungarian desert researcher, László Almásy, whose life's work was covered with the veil of oblivion for decades in his homeland. Even the editors did not mention in the encyclopaedias as if they wanted to cancel his clear performance. But the reality is irreversible. The real value of life of desert researcher was discovered in the USA. It is thoughtful that no one Hungarian filmmaker did not think of filming this unique life. The creators of United States of America, who are performance and success-oriented persons, have made this world-famous film, which sent Almásy's name to more than one billion people. He became one of the most famous Hungarians of the Earth, for which articles have been published in the world during several months.

His name came to the pages of the largest number of newspapers. The film story with full of turns was shown in one hundred and thirty countries by

television companies. Almásy had to be famous first in America, only after to get his acquainted in Hungary. As a result of the film and the criticism, he gained more recognition than all together the Hungarian Nobel Prize winners and athletes participating in the Olympic Games.

However, the film raises a thousand exciting questions. Who was this mysterious person who was looking for happiness away from his homeland, in the Libyan Desert? What did he do to organize his expeditions in the deserted territories? Why was he Rommel's soldier? How did he become a discoverer? What were the results of his work? What was the purpose of his secret mission in World War II in Africa? What goals did he set for himself? Where and how did he die?

As a result of the successful film, journalists followed him to trace the path of his life's mystical moments. While there were plenty of imaginative assumptions, and sometimes even unfounded slander in the various newspapers. Almost every detail of his life became interesting. From his political orientation to his sexual orientation, everything was interesting for people about Almásy.

However, the reality is even more interesting, than the really exciting film.

From Borostyánkő to Cairo

There is an old proverb, the apple does not fall far from its tree. György Almásy was landowner, prominent ornithologist and Asian-researcher. There was a very delightful event in his family on 22 August 1895. His wife, Ilona Pittoni, gave birth to a second born boy. There was a celebration in castle of Borostyánkő when László Ede Almásy arrived. The Almásy family was counted among the noble families of the country from the 17th century

The geography and discovery passion passed down across generations in the family. His grandfather was a founding member of the Hungarian Geographical Society established in 1872. His father, György Almásy, made several trips in Asia. He took the young Gyula Prinz, assistant of Lajos Lóczy, to the expedition between the mountains of Tien-San in 1906.

László was a difficult child during his student years. He was a student at the Benedictine High School in Kőszeg. Here he became interested in birds and flying. He was still a child when his father organized expeditions in Dobrudja, the delta of the Danube and Central Asia. A lot of zoological preparations have come home from these remote exotic landscapes.

He completed his high school education in Graz. He left Graz because of a scandalous event. As he left home late, he robbed the high school director with his bike in the gates of the school.

There were also family reasons for continuing high school in Eastbourne, England. During his English career, he became acquainted with Anglo-Saxon

Livre de László Almásy sur la recherche sur le désert libyen (publié en français au Caire).

László Almásy avec ses compagnons de voyages au Soudan (Archives du Musée de la Géographie hongroise, Érd).

Vestiges d'un véhicule militaire de Gilf Kebir au Sahara pendant la seconde guerre mondiale (photo de J. Kubassek).

Abu Ballas, Mont du Pichet
au Sahara (Égypte, photo de
J. Kubassek).

Restes de cruches écrasées
à Abu Ballas (Péter Antal,
Professeur Gyula Gábris,
photo de J. Kubassek).

culture and the British lifestyle. He learned the English language very well, spoken almost in native language level. He was in contact with scouting, whose requirements and laws had a great impact on his later life. Reading the books of the famous British Africa researcher awakened interest in the Black Continent.

The behaviour and way of thinking learned during the Eastbourne students years contributed to the success of the British and Egyptian persons' sympathies. Later he received financial support for his research work in Sahara.

During the First World War, László Almásy was a soldier in the Army of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. First he was sent to the Russian, then to the Italian front. He participated in several dangerous reconnaissance routes along the Dniester side. The Russian language knowledge of childhood was useful.

After the First World War, he attended in the return attempt of Charles IV, it was the so-called king coup. As a legitimist he accompanied the Habsburg ruler to the border together with Count Bishop János Mikes on 5 April 1921.

In the land of Africa

László Almásy gained international reputation as a racing driver. In 1926, he made his first trip to the Black Continent with Antal Esterházy. They travelled by a Steyr car from Alexandria to Khartoum along the Nile, and later crossed the Nubian and Berber deserts. The car journey made a lot of attention. The Steyr factory has appointed Almásy as the head of Cairo's representative office. They hoped that a new market will be open in Egypt for Austrian vehicles. Next year, Almásy made a risky journey to Eastern Sahara, where he travelled 700 miles to Abu Mohar's sand desert. He made several hunters' expeditions in the Libyan Desert.

He came into contact with Duke Kemal el Din, he met King Fuad and many members of the Egyptian ruling family. They were in close contact with them, so the rich Egyptians were the supporters. Kemal el Din greatly supported his travels because he realized that Almásy's activities served the geography of Egypt, and these information he collected had great strategic importance to the unknown inside Sahara.

The 1930s were fatal for László Almásy. In Syria, near Aleppo, Count Nándor Zichy had a fortunate aviation accident. Then Almásy returned to Egypt again. On 1 May 1932, he saw the long-awaited Zarzura oasis. He had seen the oasis from a Moth type airplane together with the Scottish Colonel Penderel.

The discovery of the northern valley of Gilf-Kebir's sandstone plateau, Vadi Abd el Malik, was a major achievement for geographers. In February of the following year, Almásy returned to Gilf-Kebir with a large expedition. He won the financial support of the Universal American film company with the help of Richard Bermann. He was an Austrian journalist. The young László Kádár was member of the trip, who later became professor of geography at the University of Debrecen.

Floating people in the desert

The last white spots of the Libyan Desert were depicted by Almásy's expedition in 1933. The typical rain oasis, Zarzura, was completely depopulated due to water shortage. László Almásy was the first European researcher to produce detailed geographic documentation about an unacknowledged part of the Sahara.

Knowing the steep-walled cliff in Gilf-Kebir was a difficult task for expedition members in the April heat.

Ancient animal and human portraits were discovered at the entrance of the Gilf-Kebir valley, in the sandstone rock caves of Vadi-Szúra, named the "Pictures valley". The neolithic man made the red ostrich and palm tree depictions on the cliff's walls. This proves that green vegetation has ever grown in a country where today there are only dry grass knots. Almásy noticed the most interesting drawings, the floating people. He painted watercolour painting in a sketchbook about these pictures. Swim can only be where there is water. In this part of the Sahara today there is no water or vegetation! The nearest waterway, where you can swim, is almost a thousand kilometres away. This is the Nile, to the east of the Vadi-Szúra. And it's quite certain those who made the paintings could see floating people.

It can be assumed that there were periodic or permanent rivers suitable for swimming in this area. During the expedition organized by the Hungarian Geographical Museum in 1993 we conducted detailed field studies in this rocky world. We could not find the remnants of the old lake, or lake sediments. Gyula Gábris and József Szabó geography professors and Péter Antall photographer also were members in the expedition.

Animal representations show cows, giraffes, gazelles, antelopes and ostriches. The pictures refer to the savannah climate, where the vegetation was rich in food for these animals. The identity of the creators of rock paintings is unknown.

First, the expedition of the Hungarian Geographical Museum determined the geographical coordinates of the entrance of Vadi-Szúra. According to József Szabó's survey, the caves, discovered by Almásy, have the following coordinates: North latitude 23°35'53" and East longitude 25°13'45".

Perhaps at the last minute we managed to take photographs of fragrant paint fragments.

Almásy tried to find prehistoric memories in Vadi-Szúra. His other goals were to explore the unknown oases of the Libyan Desert, Merga, Arkenut and the Uweinat Mountains.

Almásy noticed the dry riverbed, he wrote in his report to the British Royal Society:

"Summer rains gradually reach Uweinat, Arkenut, El Biba and El Hamra Vadis, Vadi Abd El Malik and Talah Vadi. This rain falls through two or three months, twice or three times a week,

usually in the evening and in the morning, often accompanied by storms and heavy rains. Such rainy periods continue for 2-3 years and then stop for a long time. The last rainfall reached Uweinat 9 years ago".

In the Uweinat Mountains bordering Sudan, Libya and Egypt, the rock caves of the Sahara are a natural water depot. The waters of the granite caves were life-saving in the desert.

Almásy and his Arabic companion, Szabr, found hundreds of human and animal pictures in Ain Dua's cave labyrinth. About 800 cave paintings were discovered by them. Similar portraits were found in Karkur Talh. The white, red, dark brown and yellow coloured animals and black human figures belong to the prehistoric man's culture.

Lodovico di Caporiacco, an Italian military cartographer, travelled and documented the seen things. Later, in Florence, under his own name, the world-famous discovery was announced. The news came to Leo Frobenius, who is a German ethnographer, and recommended a well-equipped joint expedition to the Hungarian researcher. Almásy, who always struggled with cash, accepted the offer and visited with Frobenius all places where he found prehistoric rock paintings. Frobenius, who enjoyed the support of the German state and the German companies, he learned about the most interesting prehistoric memories of Gilf-Kebir and Uweinat Mountains with the help of Almásy. After returning home, she wanted to appropriate Almásy's discoveries. He presented his own achievement as he was acquainted with Almásy in the Sahara, in Budapest, at the exhibition held in the Museum of Applied Arts, and later in the lecture organized by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The coveted glory of discovering cave images became a shameful scandal for Frobenius. In the lecture hall there were László Kádár and Richard Bermann, two participants in Almásy's 1933 expedition, who could listen to the Frobenius performance with their ears.

Bermann wrote an article in the Morning newspaper on 12 March 1934. In this article, he describes the reality of the German researcher's work. Frobenius did not answer, but immediately exchanged a ticket to a Berlin express train and hurriedly left Budapest.

Only a few persons know that Almásy has given news first of the so called "magyarábs", whose ancestors have been abducted by the Turks from Hungary. Near Vádi Halfa there is an islands of the Nile, where he found the representatives of "magyarábs". They welcomed with love and as a relative László Almásy.

Rommel's soldier in Africa

During the Second World War, Italy was preparing for large-scale military operations in Libya. However, ambitions surpassed the opportunities of the Italians, and on 9 December 1940, under the leadership of General Richard O'Connor, the British army was devastatingly defeated the Italians. The English army occupied Bardha, Tobruk and Dera. Finally after a few weeks, the

X. Italian army was totally defeated because they lost a lot of people. More than forty thousand Italian soldiers fell into prison.

In February 1941, the military leadership decided in Berlin to help Italy in Africa. However, operations in North Africa have already begun earlier.

The first German exploration battalion arrived into Tripoli in February 1941. Almásy's name was well known in the German military intelligence centre (Abwehr), because his book Unknown Sahara also was published in Germany. The Germans knew that Almásy was not only an excellent researcher of the Sahara, but also had excellent relations in Egyptian leadership circles. As a flying instructor, he built a friendly relationship with many distinguished people in Cairo. He was a regular guest in King Faruk's court, with his friends Taher Pasha, Alaeddin Mouhtar Pasha and also the Egyptian Chief of Staff, El Masti Pasha, but he was in contact with the members of the anti-Anglican youth officers' movement, Gamal Abdel Nasser and Anwar el Sadat, the later presidents of Egypt.

Almásy spent his military service in the Hungarian Air Force. Lieutenant Commander Kenessey Waldemar, commander of the Hungarian Armed Forces, commanded Almásy to the German forces on 8 February 1941, because the Germans asked it. The personal requester meant extraordinary prestige, as the Germans did not suffer from lack of staff, but they needed a professional who knew the desert very well. In the German Empire there was no other specialist who would have known better the Sahara as Almásy. The Hungarian desert researcher got a German uniform, received a German soldier's book, but he wore his Hungarian badges on his clothes.

During his first assignment, he demonstrated his unmatched ability to fly. After a few months of training, he got a driving license for Heinkel and Junkers fighting machines. His name is linked to one of the most exciting secret action of the Second World War, the Salaam operation. Two German intelligence, Johann Eppler and Hans Gerd Sandstede, was passed behind the English lines. In the way set by Abwehr was about 5600 kilometres through uninhabited desert roads. They took the road with two Ford de Luxe trucks and two Ford cars. The participants were many times in danger of life. The action in the heat of about 50°C in May succeeded in a miraculous way. About 500 British soldiers searched the German explorers with the help of the famous desert researcher, Bagnold, as they had been able to decipher the messages of the radio distribution in possession of the cryptographic keys.

Almásy defeated the desert obstacles with his unexampled ingenuity. He replaced the missing fuel from the British vehicles left behind by Gilf-Kebir. He wound up the oil caps of abandoned vehicles and scattered desert sand in the oily tank. He also made sure that there was not any sand in the tank cap to show for the operation. He was also careful not to sprinkle the same amount of sand in the oil tanks in order not to stop the engines at the same time. It is possible to imagine what the British felt when, after use 10-20 km of their vehicles, they became ineffective following each other.

L'homme préhistorique a capturé la riche faune du climat principalement pluvieux, peinture rupestre (Gilf Kebir, Vadi Sura, photo de J. Kubassek).

Représentation de la lutte préhistorique dans les Monts Uweinât, Karkur Talh (aquarelle de László Almásy).

Vestiges de de peintures rupestres préhistoriques représentaant des hommes (Égypte, Gilf Kebir, Sourate Vadi, photo de J. Kubassek).

Personnes nageant dans le désert (Égypte, aquarelle de László Almásy, Gilf Kebir, Vadi Sura).

Formations rocheuses calcaires dues à l'érosion éolienne - panneau de signalisation naturel dans le Sahara (Égypte, oasis de Farafra, photo de J. Kubassek).

Montagne couverte de débris de fragmentation au sud-est de Gilf Kebir (photo de J. Kubassek).

Sphinx formé par l'érosion éolienne au premier plan de Gilf Kebir (photo de J. Kubassek).

Entrée de la légendaire grotte de Vadi Sura (Égypte, Gilf Kebir, photo de J. Kubassek).

Participants in the Salaam action were almost ashamed when the Hungarian desert researcher saved them from the death. On the southern edge of the Gilf-Kebir, it was astonishing that the declining water resources would not be enough to reach the valley of Nile. Almásy remembered that in the entrance of the nearby Vadi-Szúra, disguised tin cans in the rocks, he placed a safety water depot in 1932. The 8 Shell water tanks from Cairo were closed at the same time by himself. This water resource saved Bagnold and his companion's life in 1935 when they were already prepared for thirst death.

Bagnold was able to stay alive after 8 days of rescue escaping from them because 4 cans of water were used by them. Bagnold knew about the water depot from Almásy. Almásy set up the drainage for the purpose of later exploration of the nearby caves. When he mentioned this for his companions, they all listened incredulously. They thought their commander wanted to give them hope. However, Almásy said the truth. After a short search, he found four uninjured water tanks. The four other tin cans used by Bagnolds had already been rusted. Almásy carefully opened one of the cans. The water was warm, but it was clean. In the carefully sealed cans the ten-year-old water was drinkable.

In Kharga oasis Almásy, deceived by the British-Egyptian checkpoint, found refuge from British soldiers. All units of the Long Range Desert Group were alerted, but Almásy escaped from the English in almost incredible ways, through the inaccessible paths of the Aqaba Gateway.

Eppeler and Sandstede, the two German intelligence officers, were led by Asiut, who later fell into Cairo because of their luxurious lifestyle and carelessness. However, Almásy had successfully completed their mission and returned to Gialo after a 5 600 km journey.

Almásy has described his experiences in Africa in his book, paying attention to the fewer concrete facts about his work. The title of his book is *Rommel's army in Libya*. This book later served as a charge in the lawsuit against him.

Again in the land of Africa

He spent the last years of his life in Egypt, Cairo, Zamalek in a small lodging. He maintained himself as a light aircraft trainer and also guided off-road trips in the desert. He attempted to find the traces of Karmy. This large Persian troop advanced from Theba to Siva oasis but disappeared in Libyan sand with treasury.

A number of legends emerged on the death of Almásy.

The career of this extraordinary man throughout a half of a century abounded with surprises and secrets. Nevertheless, the excellent racing driver, reckless aviator, helpful scout, passionate huntsman, inventive businessman, successful archeologist, wily intelligence officer, captivating narrator, distinctive writer, tortured prisoner, accused by the people's tribunal died in trivial circumstances.

Suffering from amebic dysentery, he was hospitalized in Wehrle Sanatorium Salzburg where prof. Wehrle performed an operation on him but liver abscess and other complications led to fatal outcome on 22 March 1951.

The contemporary circumstances prevented the transport of his body to Borostyánkő therefore he was buried in Kommunalfriedhof Salzburg.

His tomb was protected from the destruction by Hungarian Foundation of Aviatrics and Hungarian Aeronautical Association with the unselfish help of the members and especially József Kasza.

They set up a marble memorial onto the tomb in 1994 at their own expense.

At the centenary of his birth the Hungarian Post issued a special stamp and envelope to his memory on 22 August 1995.

In the garden of Hungarian Geological Museum of Érd stands a bust depicted him as aviator, traveller of Libyan Desert and explorer of Zarzura oasis sculptured by Béla Domonkos. Some of his personal articles can be seen in this museum's display named "Hungarian travellers, geographical explorers", for example a German military flash used on the African battlefield and a topee donated by former flying comrade László Rekettyés.

We have a haphazardly remained book of his library, the title of which is "3 months in the Libyan Desert" written by Gerhard Rohls and published in Kassel 1875 in German. Within it Almásy makes a remark with his own hand: "The life is often a dream and a dream is sometimes the life".

László Almásy en uniforme d'officier de l'Armée de l'air Royale Hongroise (Archives du Musée de la Géographie hongroise, Érd).

Additional Blocks, Boxed Writings

Discovery of Zarzura

The journal of the Royal Geographic Society of the United Kingdom regularly reported on the scientific research carried out by desert researchers for the search of Zarzura. Every year, some well-equipped expeditions were launched with the aim of raising the veil of Gilf-Kebir's millennial secrets.

Almásy was particularly impressed by the fact that in 1818 Wilkinson heard in Dachla-oasis that Vadi Zarzura was in the west for five to six days journey. The narrators were old Arab persons who mentioned the names of the more remote Kufra oases, Kebabo, Taizerbo and Vadi Ribiana. The famous German traveller, Gerhard Rohlfs, also heard of Zarzura in Dachla, in 1874. He noted the destruction of the water depot of tibu people at Abu Ballas. Before the First World War, a prominent British scientist, Harding-King, was staying for a long time in Dachla, and his main goal was to reach the Zarzura oasis. Almásy compared and analysed all facts available to him, concluding that the oasis of olives, the unknown oasis between Kufra and Abu Ballas, and the long-sought Zarzura may be in the same place at the northern foothills of Gilf-Kebir.

Prehistoric rock paintings in caves in Gilf-Kebir

In 1932, Almásy made the first significant rock picture discoveries in one of the valleys in Gilf-Kebir. So he write about the memorable event:

"I went on an exploration trip with Sabr along the ledge of Gilf Plateau, to east direction. From now, I recognized a stratification of rocks where soft sandstone rests on hard rock. I drove to such valley, 4 kilometres from our camp. Our new discoveries surpassed all expectations. I found four caves full with beautiful paintings. In the largest of them, it was clear that the top of the cave had been completely painted at a long time ago. In the largest cave I found a large, oval polished stone, one of its surfaces covered with red paintings. At first I thought it was the stone used to grind the toner, but as I looked at it, I saw eyes and mouths engraved on both rounded sides of the stone. I called this valley to the "Valley of Images" named Vadi-Szúra, and my friends were amazed when I was driving them the next day".

The English patient

Only a few people know that the motto of the world-famous film, the fate of the wounded English pilot, is a credible event. Almásy wrote a book about his war memories after returning from Africa. The work of Rommel's army in Libya was published in 1943.

The rare volume was indexed after the Second World War. The rare volumes was indexed after the Second World War. Its copies were also extracted from the libraries and destroyed. Only some persons have left some books, which they found at auction at high prices. After the success of the film, the book was released, which won readers' interest.

"They call me on the phone during breakfast. The chief of the Air Force's hospital call me. He knows I'm talking in English, so he asks me to go to the hospital because the plane pilot was shot down during the night, and he escaped with a parachute and was delivered wounded. After a short time I was in the hospital. The doctor asked me to be the interpreter of the shot-down English officer. I stood there in front of his bed and looked at the man who belonged to those who had caused us so much bitterness. He suffered severe burns on both of his lower arms and his left face. His moustache spun, looking at me awkwardly with gray eyes.... He told me that the machine had been hit and that he was torn off his seat from the nose of the air plane. Even at the moment of the explosion, the flame burned him.

He only remembers that he had pulled his parachute and landed. Then it seemed he was unconscious and only came back when he was taken to the hospital by car.

German doctors have done their best to save life. After a day or two I heard about the condition of the patient with the impartial expertise that the doctor treats all his patients, regardless of their identity.

There are moments when war brings us a picture we can scarcely understand comprehensively. The cruel, devastating enemy, its defeat, the duty of a practicing physician and the care of the nurse, made me so contradictory that I could not understand them.... In the German hospitals, the wounded is primarily a man. Those who are caring for the wounded people, only see the man who is the former opponent. The wounded soldier did not survive the crisis. On the evening of the sixth day, the doctor asked me to be there if the patient had any last wish. The next afternoon in the little oasis town's military cemetery, the pilot of a shotgun night bomber was put to eternal rest.

The order of the commander of the garrison was granted in military ornaments and in endowment."

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La caverne rocheuse de Vadi Sura cache des peintures rupestres préhistoriques (Gilf Kebir, photo de J. Kubassek, 1993).

Dans le Sahara, les vastes grottes prouvent que les anciennes rivières se sont effondrées dans le calcaire (photo de J. Kubassek).

Porte en pierre naturelle
à Gilf Kebir (photo de J.
Kubassek).