

HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520 U. S. Army

19 January 1945

ESCAPE STATEMENT

1. Boles, Bates, 2nd Lt., 0-717728, 765th B. Sq., 461st Gp.
Born - 1 June 1922 Enlisted - 19 June 1943
Home Address - R.R. #A, Derval, Okla.
Peacetime Profession - Student Duty - Bombardier
MIA - 20 Nov 1944 RTD - 19 Jan 1945 Missions - 3
1. Hart, William C., F/O, T-129677, 765th B. Sq., 461st B. Gp.
Born - 23 April 1921 Enlisted - 9 Nov 1942
Home Address - 8940 210 Place, Queens, Village, N.Y.
Peacetime Profession - College Student Duty - Navigator
MIA - 20 Nov 1944 RTD - 18 Jan 1945 Missions - 3
1. Shaffer, Dorance R., S/Sgt., 35125416, 765th B. Sq., 461st B. Gp.
Born - 27 Oct 1918 Enlisted - 17 June 1941
Home Address - 115 N Plaza Ave., Dayton, Ohio
Peacetime Profession - Bookkeeper Duty - Radio Monitor
MIA - 20 Nov 1944 RTD - ? Missions - 6
1. Large, Dewey E., Cpl., 14100062, 765th B. Sq., 461st B Gp.
Born - 11 May 1922 Enlisted - 24 Aug 1942
Home Address - Route 4, Savierville, Texas
Peacetime Profession - Student Duty - Upper Gunner
MIA - 20 Nov 1944 RTD - 18 Jan 1945 Missions - 3
1. Scanlon, Robert L., Cpl., 16176741, 765th B. Sq., 461st B. Gp.
Born - 10 April 1925 Enlisted - 3 March 1943
Home Address - 2381 Casper Ave., Detroit, Mich.
Peacetime Profession - Clerk Duty - Engineer
MIA - 20 Nov 1944 RTD - 18 Jan 1945 Missions - 3

Source 3 sustained rupture on parachuting. Within half an hour Lt. Wager and Cpl. Scanlon, who had fractured his left ankle on landing, were brought to him by peasant women. The three were taken by wagon to a house and later to Garesnica, 2 ½ miles from landing spot.

Source 4 landed and ran to Cpl. Meiffert, in a tree nearby. About 200 Partisans with guns gathered immediately. Cpl. Boyce then came and the three were taken to the house of Manko Vankovic at the town of Katar. That night taken by wagon to Tomassets and interrogated by Partisan officers, who phoned Garesnica and learned that 5 others of the crew were there. Next morning taken to Grasnice, 12 miles ESE of Tomassets.

Source 5 landed, avoided contact, ran for an hour and hid overnight in a nearby woods. Next morning he cautiously followed peasants into the town of Grasnice and was taken to the garrison where all but Lt. Boles had been gathered.

Source 6 destroyed radio facilities, charts on landing, and was taken by a civilian to a Partisan Post, where he contacted Lt. Wager at Grasnice by phone. At the PCP were a Partisan Captain and four others. Arrived Grasnice Hq., next day.

At Grasnice, source 2 (Hart) and Cpl. Scanlon were cared for by an inefficient civilian doctor. Hart was groggy and feverish. Leaving Grasnice the 21st Dec., all were taken to British mission at Gazma, 45 45N, 16 35E. The field here is useless for evacuation. Scanlon taken to Conspiracy hospital in the mountains 30 miles SSE of Gazma, where his foot was put in a plaster cast by a captured German doctor. Remained 3 ½ weeks during which time many Partisans wounded were brought there. Returned through Mikleus, 45 37N, 748E, and taken by train to Grasnice, then to Gazma to rejoin the others.

The others meanwhile had remained one week at Gazma under extremely bad living conditions, potatoes and wine only; everybody had GIs. Met 7 Americans from other crews. Weapons but no food was dropped during the week. The British then began an evacuation to Kutina, another mission, but Ustashi were raiding and Germans had the railroad. They returned to Grasnice to live 3 or 4 more weeks, til Dec 18, under the worst possible conditions. 11 men in one room, all were sick. A Partisan woman cook and a little girl also slept in the room, and Partisans were often pilleted in the same room when they came through. No toilet, no salt, no supplies in response to radio appeal. Shaffer had jaundice and Large was sick with rupture.

On 2nd Dec, another crew (10) landed, and another crew of 3 on the 17th. The British had German captives firing AA at German observation planes, with no results.

Left Gazma 18 Dec, 26 Americans of which four were officers; 6 British, 1 an officer; British Major Wells in charge. By truck to Virovitice, then on 20th by cart Barcs, Hungary, crossing the Drave on 21st. By supply truck to Kaposvar, where they were treated well, deloused and fed. Party was now 33, having picked up Sgt. Mathis of another crew.

Russians issued equipment to them. Left Xmas day for Dvnaomlod, 3 miles north of Pecs by autobus, being strafed along with Russian supply trucks. Wager and Boyce had jaundice and flu, and Meiffert had jaundice. 10 Americans under Capt. Kelly and British Capt. Coates arrived.

5 January 45, went by truck to Timossoro, Rumania; then 4 days by train to Buckarest, arriving 11 January. 18th Jan, flown to Bari, except Lt. Hughes, who followed next day. Meiffert, Boyce and Wager still in Bucharest.

CHARLES N. KALCOUNOS,
1st Lt., A.C.
Interrogator.

5 Incls.

Incls. 1, Ltr. 383.6 (8 copies)

Incls. 2, 5, Appendix B,C,D,F

APPENDIX C

No maps of area east of Danube. Were told to fly without arms by A-2, and their arms had been checked into supply office before leaving. Arms necessary in Yugoslavia; in case of landing in Germany they could be jettisoned or hidden.

Advise keeping all equipment, particularly clothes for Partisans who are in great need, may lift them.

Salt, dysentery pills, chocolate and cigarettes needed in escape kits; also paper to make cigarettes. Tobacco was available. Striker of match case immediately came off. Some compasses didn't work. Flashlights needed badly.

All crews should be briefed about Ustachi.