

HEADQUARTERS
461ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ARMY AIR FORCES
Office of the Combat Intelligence Officer

APO 520, c/o Postmaster
New York, N.Y.
30 April 1945

SUBJECT: Escape Statement

TO : Commanding General, Fifteenth Air Force, APO 520, c/o PM,
NY, NY Attention: AC of S, A-2.

THROUGH: Commanding General, 49th Bombardment Wing (H), APO 520, c/o
PM, NY, NY.

1. Forms for escape statements have been filled out by and are included for forwarding as follows:

- a. 2nd Lt. Randall L. Webb, O-771851
- b. 2nd Lt. Walter O. Reil, O-1302196
- c. 2nd Lt. Edwin F. Strauss, O-2064673
- d. 2nd Lt. Michael H. Milby, O-280404
- e. S Sgt. James G. Erwin, 36767696
- f. S Sgt. William T. Jones, 34354387
- g. S Sgt. Frederick J. Mc Grath, 32914310
- h. S Sgt. Thomas J. Reiland, 32780874
- i. Cpl. Donald R. Hall, 17092185

2. The above listed personnel, flying as a crew in aircraft number 49 of the 461st Bombardment Group, took off in a Group formation on 26 March 1945 to bomb the Straszhof Marshalling Yard, Austria. En route to the target the plane lost an engine approximately thirty (30) miles southwest of Pecs, Hungary. Shortly thereafter the plane lost a second engine and an oil leak necessitated the feathering of number 3 engine. Leaving the formation near Pecs, the plane circled the landing strip at that city, gave the Russian recognition signal for the day, and landed safely without incident. Russian soldiers came to the plane as soon as it had landed and directed that the bombs be removed. After this, the pilot, 2nd Lt. Randall L. Webb, taxied the plane to the opposite end of the airdrome from which it had stopped. There the Russians took command of the plane and stationed a detail to guard it.

3. Source No. 1 - 2nd Lt. Randall L. Webb, O-771851.

Crew of ten (10) persons was taken to the Commanding Officer of the Russians at the Pecs Airdrome who ordered them hospitalized for the night. At 2200 hours on 27 March the crew was taken in the rain on open trucks to Scavoly, Hungary (46° 11' N - 19° 09' E). There the crew members met a Colonel Waugh and a Major Blanton. Colonel Waugh, a member of a B-17 Group in the Fifteenth Air Force, was in command of a

party of American Officers and Men. The following day the party moved to Baja, Hungary (46° 11' N - 18° 57' E) by trucks. At Baja, Colonel Waugh had a total of eighty-eight (88) officers and men in his party. After several hours at Baja members of the party were placed in box cars to start a two day trip to Szeged. After arriving there the party waited ten (10) hours before beginning a three day train ride for Timisoara, Roumania. From there the party travelled on a Russian hospital train to Bucharest, Roumania. In Bucharest, Colonel Waugh took the party to the United States Mission where they were given some clothing and some Red Cross supplies.

At Bucharest seventeen members of the party, including S/Sgt. Roy G. Myers, 16083741, of Lt. Webb's crew, were left in a hospital in Bucharest. The remaining sixty-one (61) members of the party travelled on a good train from Bucharest to Galatz, Roumania. From there they took a truck to Reni, Roumania (45°25' N - 28°18' E). There they boarded a sleeper for Odessa.

After being in Odessa approximately two (2) weeks, the party left on an English transport on 21 April 1945. On 27 April the transport arrived at Naples, Italy. The following day the above listed members of Lt. Webb's crew were transported to Headquarters of the Fifteenth Air Force. On 29 April the above listed crew members were returned to the 461st Bombardment Group.

4. No member of this crew was at any time in enemy hands.

5. After this crew landed at Pecs a Russian guard was placed with it. A Russian lieutenant accompanied Colonel Waugh and his party from Baja to Odessa and remained with them until they went aboard the boat. Although the members of the party were not considered prisoners, at no time were they permitted absolute freedom.

LEIGH M. LOTT
Major, Air Corps
Combat Intelligence Officer