

HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520 U. S. Army

19 January 1945

ESCAPE STATEMENT

1. Nayes, LeRoy M., 2nd Lt., 0-780414, 765th B. Sq., 461st B. Gp.

Born - 2 Mar 24 Enlisted - 12 Dec 42

Home Address - Fingal, N. Dak.

Peacetime Profession - Student - Farmer

MIA - 15 Dec 1944 RTD - 19 Jan 44 Missions - 3

1. Wroclawski, Jan E., S/Sgt., 32884714, 765th B. Sq., 461st B. Gp.

Born - 28 Dec 15 Enlisted - 7 Apr 43

Home Address - Poland

Peacetime Profession - Watchmaker

MIA - 15 Dec 1944 RTD - 19 Jan 44 Missions - 38

1. Hill, Albert G., Sgt., 34829901, 765th B. Sq., 461st B. Gp.

Born - 26 May 22 Enlisted - 19 Oct 43

Home Address - Route #1, Fortson

Peacetime Profession - Dairying

MIA - 15 Dec 1944 RTD - 19 Jan 44 Missions - 14

1. Martino, James V., Cpl., 31292028, 765th B. Sq., 461st B. Gp.

Born - 17 Nov 24 Enlisted - 25 Mar 43

Home Address - Cranston, R.I.

Peacetime Profession - Glass Worker

MIA - 15 Dec 1944 RTD - 19 Jan 44 Missions - 47

2. Target was Linz, Austria. About 40 minutes from the target, over a heavy undercast, No. 1 engine got hot and vibrated, and would not feather or cut off. The engine finally cut off, but would not feather, and aircraft was losing altitude. Co-pilot cut engine back in to rise above overcast. Gas was very low, and pilot on interphone said oil pressure on all engines low. Navigator gave pilot heading for Yugoslavia. When gas went down to about 400 gallons, pilot gave order to bail out. Four went out camera hatch, Hill being last. From the bomb-bay, Nayes went first,

followed by another man and then Wroclawski. Wroclawski said all others were set to go and he saw one bail out after him.

3. Wroclawski was in German hands, but escaped before reaching prisoner of war camp.

4. Went through trees and landed in water, where flood had back up into forest. Started swimming and gave out. Civilian picked up in a boat and source fainted. Civilian took source to cabin where he revived.

General location 5-10 miles n/w of Kutina, Yugoslavia (4529N-1646E). Next day was joined by Martino and Hill. Considerable local fighting. This location dangerous, due to Ustachi concentration camp few miles away. Next day by boat through trees. Challenged and shot at by boatload of Ustachi. Tried again, after dark, and got through. Getting near Kutina, picked up source No. 3 from a shack the next day.

The four men went to Poljana (4528N-1700E) travelling at night, behind hedge-rows, etc. Stayed hidden there five days, Ustachi soldiers all around. Then got past into Partisan territory. Met Partisans, who carried them to command post. Then, with Partisan passes, on to Pakrac (4526N-1712E), then to Papuk. Evacuated twenty days later by C-47 to Bari.

Source No. 2 was picked up after water landing by civilians in boat. Picked up Martino, who was out on his feet, and recovered later. Stayed over night, and met Lt. Naves next day.

Source No. 3 was captured by Germans in boat. While Germans later were firing at native boat, source jumped out. Thinks he overturned boat. Source hid behind trees in water, got to shack in water, met Source No. 1 there a few days later.

J. C. RAMSEY, Jr.,
Capt., A.C.,
Interrogator

5 Incls:

Incl 1 - Ltr 383.6

Incl 4 - Appendices B, C, D, F

Nayes, LeRoy M., 2nd Lt., 0-780414 and 3 crew members, 765th B. Sq., 461st B. Gp. Ref: USA/SKP/482, 19 Jan 45.

APPENDIX C

Need waterproofing for escape kit. Need more detailed maps. Need more halazone tablets. Lighter would be better than matches. Need knife. Need GI shoes always. Should always have side-arms.