

HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520 U. S. ARMY

16 May 1945

ESCAPE STATEMENT

1. Viliesis, Paul P., 2d Lt., 0-720620, 764th B. Sq., 461st B. Gp.

Born - 7 Aug 1922 Enlisted - 7 Dec 1941

Home Address - King St., West Hanover, Mass.

Peacetime Profession - Student - Machinist

MIA - 9 Mar 1945 RTD - 15 May 1945 Missions - 17 Sorties - 9

1. Jahries, Robert H., 2d Lt., 0-2064062, 764th B. Sq., 461st B. Gp.

Born - 14 Sep 1924 Enlisted - May 1943

Home Address - 822 San Juan Pl., San Diego, Cal.

Peacetime Profession - Student

MIA - 9 Mar 1945 RTD - 15 May 1945 Missions - 14 Sorties - 7

1. Liefer, Charles (NMI), 2d Lt., 0-2069050, 764th B. Sq., 461st B. Gp.

Born - 5 Dec 1923 Enlisted - 9 Mar 1943

Home Address - 207 E. Oak St., Louisville, Ky.

Peacetime Profession - Student - Mechanic

MIA - 9 Mar 1945 RTD - 15 May 1945 Missions - 23 Sorties - 12

1. Nahnke, Arthur F., S/Sgt., 36707776, 764th B. Sq., 461st B. Gp.

Born - 16 Jul 1922 Enlisted - 6 Nov 1942

Home Address - 23 - 156th Place, Calumet City, Illinois

Peacetime Profession - Not noted

MIA - 9 Mar 1945 RTD - 15 May 1945 Missions - 32 Sorties - 26

1. Robert E. Lee, Sgt., 42070163, 764th B. Sq., 461st B. Gp.

Born - 4 Sep 1925 Enlisted - 17 Feb 1944

Home Address - 121 East 128th St., N.Y.C.

Peacetime Profession - Aviation Student

MIA - 9 Mar 1945 RTD - 15 May 1945 Missions - 17 Sorties - 9

1. Khun, Kenneth N., Sgt., 12076178, 764th B. Sq., 461st B. Gp.

Born - 15 Sep 1921

Enlisted - 31 Mar 1942

Home Address - 515 Morris Avenue, Elizabeth, N. J.

Peacetime Profession - Stenographer

MIA - 9 Mar 1945 RTD - 15 May 1945 Missions - 17 Sorties - 9

1. Davis, Victor W., Sgt., 12181187, 764th B. Sq., 461st B. Gp.

Born - 11 Mar 1923

Enlisted - Oct 1942

Home Address - 23-84 - 24th St., L.I. City, N.Y.

Peacetime Profession - Not given

MIA - 9 Mar 1945 RTD - 15 May 1945 Missions - 17 Sorties - 9

2. These sources were on a bombing mission to Bruck Marshalling yard on 9 March in B-24 type plane. Aircraft was hit by another plane about 15-20 km west of Otocac. The wing was bent and two motors were out. Sources bailed out and plane is believed to have burned after crashing.

3. Sources were all picked up by Ustachi and Germans and held as P/Ws in Gospic, Otocac (4452N-1514 E) and Zagreb.

4. All sources were taken to a small villager about 15-20 km west of Otocac for one night and put in a small house in one room, heavily guarded. Next day they were brought to Otocac and put in small room in a hotel for two nights; then sources were moved by wagob to Gospic where the Ustachi had headquarters. There they found other prisoners (13) and stayed in small guarded room for seven (7) days. On 10 March sources were taken to Zagreb and spent one night in a cellar of Ministry building and then, the following day, were brought to a barracks built for prisoners, outside Zagreb. With the exception of several bad incidents (listed in Appendix D, attached), sources were treated fairly well. Guards were Domobrans.

On 8 May heavy fighting took place between Partisans and Ustachi. Sources were in midst of fighting; spent night in a farm house and bomb shelter. Next day (9 May) sources were brought to Hotel Central by Partisans as the latter had overrun surrounding territory in preceding night and day. After six days, sources were evacuated to Bari, 10 May as they had been in contact with English and American missions who arrived on 10 May.

W. T. EMMET,
Capt., A.C.,
Interrogator.

4 Incls:

1. Ltr 383.6 (7)
2. Appendix B
3. Appendix D
4. Appendix F

Appendix B

10/15 May

Major Read, British Mission Zagreb,
and Capt Dean, American Mission -
both were very helpful.

8 May

Baroness Nickolic; outside Zagreb;
gave shelter and food to some.

Father Theodore Benkowicz, a
Catholic priest; held Mass for
Catholic men; claimed his home was
steelton, Pa. Gave medicine, tea
and food to those who were ill with
dysentery, etc.

APPENDIX D

1. Everything taken away of personal value.

2. Major Macovitch of Gospic and colonel in charge, name unknown, took everything away except trousers and shirts; weather was very cold; wore sources' flying clothes.

Food was nil. Five spoons of so called soup twice a day. Sources were forced to fill in bomb craters 14 March. Also to defuse dud bombs. On 18 March, sources were put in middle of bridge (Gospic) because Ustachi believed it would be bombed. Ustachi guards were placed at each end of bridge. Sources were there from 0800 to 1300 hours.

3. Lt. Ivan Hodok, also unfriendly, wore sources' clothes. This man worked under Macovitch; sources believed that he gave up to English at Ljubljana.

4. At Gospic the major and colonel (name unknown) and Lt. all said they would not recognize Geneva Convention.

5. By the time sources reached Zagreb, higher ups realized war was not going too well and treated them better.

6. Guards said they were going to kill one of the group, just for fun. General Bobons, black guard, boasted of killing many people.

Escape Statement, Hq, Fifteenth AF, Ref: USA/SKP/824

APPENDIX F

Other 3 members of crew bailed out first. Chutes opened and source (Lt. Vilieisis) believes they landed safely.