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

1. Bettinger, Art W., Cpl., 32675866, 765th B. Sq., 461st B. Gp.

Born - ? 1922 Enlisted - ? 1942

Home Address - 453 Pardee Road

Peacetime Profession - None Duty - Radio Operator

MIA - 20 Nov 1944 RTD - 18 Jan 1945 Missions - 3

1. Bryant, Joe R., Cpl., 14200047, 765th B. Sq., 461st B. Gp.

Born - 15 March 1925

Enlisted 8 March 1943

Home Address - Woodlawn, Tenn.

Peacetime Profession - Student Duty - Tail Gunner

MIA - 20 Nov 1944 RTD - 19 Jan 1945 Missions - 3

1. Hughes, Arthur L. 2nd Lt., 0-771034, 765th B. Sq., 461st B. Gp.

Born - 10 Sept 1925 Enlisted 12 Dec 1942

Home Address - 320 Marys St., San Marcus, Texas

Peacetime Profession - Truck Driver Duty - Pilot

MIA - 20 Nov 1944 RTD - 18 Jan 1945 Missions - 3

- 2. Mission to Blechhammer South, November 20, 1944. Over TP flak destroyed gas tanks of #1 and #3 engines. Shell holes in nose turret. Waist oxygen failed. #1 and #3 ran out of gas soon after leaving TP, but fuel was transferred to them. Caught up with squadron and started for Vis with formation. Running low on gas over SISAK, and headed for alternate field at 45 40N, 17 10E, coordinate given to navigator by S-2 briefing before mission. (Note: This is a wrong coordinate. No field there.) #2 gas tank ran out of gas. Guns and equipment were jettisoned; all four engines were running off #4 tank. Order given to prepare to bail out. No airfield. All bailed out without difficulty. Partisans said afterwards that plane landed near TOMASSETAS, 12 ½ miles WNW of Garesnica, Yugo., 45 35N, 16 55E. Parts were salvaged by Partisans, who would not take them to the plane.
 - 3. Never in enemy hands.
- 4. Source 1 landed at small village and was taken by Partisans to a peasant house. They were going raiding and wanted him to come along. Next day they took him by wagon to Garesnica, Yugo., 45 35N, 16 55E, where all the others were already gathered.

Source 2 was knocked out upon landing, and woke in a peasant cart in which he was taken to a house where Sqt. Shaffer was. Sqt. Shaffer having been brought there by peasant women 15 minutes before. That evening there were taken to the Partisan Hq., at Garesnica.

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, $2 \frac{1}{2}$ 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 Conspiration 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 Dvnakomlod, 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.