

3 June 1945

ESCAPE STATEMENT

1. Hughes, Frederick W., Cpl. 17132483, 767 B.Sq., 461 B.Gp.

Born - 24 Sept 1920

Enlisted - 20 Oct 1942

Home address - 5076 Arlington St. Louis #20, Missouri

Peacetime profession - Inspector for AAF Misc. material, Material Command.

MIA - 17 Dec 44

RTD - 20 May 45

Missions - 1 Sorties - 1

2. On 17 Dec 44 Source was on a mission to BLECHHAMMER in a B-24 a/c piloted by 1st Lt. Fred Capalbo. The copilot was Lt. William C. Rundbecken (?) and the crew of 11 men included a cameraman.

On the way to the target the A/C had difficulty in staying in formation and two bombs were salvoed to keep up with the formation. (Trouble was experienced in opening and closing the bomb bay doors). Over the Austrian-Yugoslav border No. 4 engine was hit by flak, and sustained a run-away prop. A shell burst in the bomb bay and flaming gas flowed over the command deck. Other flak hits started fires in the pilots compartment and radio room. Oxygen bottles blew up, interphone and alarm bells were out.

Source saw the fire in the bomb bay and warned the men in the rear of the A/C. The cameraman then bailed out. At this time the plane was attacked by 5 FW-190 a/c and bullets ripped through the A/C, the hydraulic system went out.

The co-pilot (Lt. Rundbaken?) went to the bomb bay to open the doors, while doing so was burned to death.

Source saw the radio operator (Cpl John A. Villars) walk to the bomb bays with his chute on. He looked inside then collapsed and died on the deck. The engineer (cpl Edgar A. Squires) went to his assistance and was badly burned about the face, hands and legs in doing so. Source was wounded in the head when flak blew in the waist gun window; he sustained minor concussion but was able to bail out.

Eight men are known to have bailed from the a/c and all chutes opened. The pilot was last man out; area TOVAGOV (4830N-1725E).

The a/c crashed at 4932N-1730E) in village of KOKORY, having exploded in mid-air.

3. Never in enemy hands.

4. Source landed by the edge of a forest near TOVAGOV (4930B-1725E). He hid his chute and "Mae West" and headed for where he had seen his companions land. A Slovak gamekeeper found source and motioned him to lay low, later hiding him in a nursery of pine trees. Later the same evening this man returned with some food and shoes which he gave source,

then took him to his home on the edge of the forest where he was warmly greeted by the family.

Source then lived with these people for 3 months, during which time he was well taken care of, and was given plenty of good food. Source suffered from shock for about two weeks and was treated for this, as well as his head injuries, by the family. Gestapo and SS frequently visited the house, but source hid in a "crypt" which he had dug under the floor of the kitchen and was never discovered. He was unable to gain firsthand information about his own crew, but heard that Villers and Rundbaken were dead (info thru English speaking Czech).

German espionage agents found out that source was in the house and on 17 Mar 45 his helper was arrested by the German Military Police and reported later to have been tortured over a period to make him give information. At this time source left the house and joined an English speaking Czech at BRODEK and was hidden in a sugar factory. Here source lived with a boy cousin of his helpers for 2 months. His Czech helper keeping them supplied with food, cigarettes, etc.

On 19 May 45 Russian troops occupied this area and liberated source. Source saw the Russian Commandant of BRODEK who gave him a letter to return to his lines. From here source travelled via PREROVA, and by very circuitous routes by train to PRAGUE. Here he met an American G-2 officer who drove him to PIESEN (V Corps Hq) thence by air to REIMS< FRANCE and by courier on 3 June 45 to PARIS. From here by air to MARSEILLES, ROME to BARI, reached 4 June 45.

(During his stay at BRODEK, up to 19 May 45, source was assisting SLOVAK Partisans engaged in anti-German espionage and sabotage work. On 1 May source was in joint command of a party of 4 Slovak Partisans who disarmed all the Germans (Volketrum) in CITOV (about 15 men in all). All weapons, ammunitions, etc were taken to the city office, on orders from London, England.

Source joint commander was known as VIT RIMR of BRIDEK U PREROVA, Sugar Factory Slovakia. Later source made a German Commander and 150 men put up their hands and sent them to surrender to the Russian Army).

J. G. K. Kennedy  
Captain, AIS,  
Interrogator.

4 Incls:

1. Ltr 383.6
2. Appendix B
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HQ. 15 AF, escape statement, 5 June 1945, Ref: USA/SKP/853.

APPENDIX B

17 Dec 44 - 17 Mar 45  
JAKUBCIK STANISLAV  
Revir Trni  
Post Tovagov, Morava, C.S.R.

His source in his house at great risk. Fed and clothed him and nursed him while ill. Was arrested by Germans and tortured to give away source, but did not talk. Released by Russians May 45.

17 Mar 45 - 19 May 45  
VIT HIMR  
Brodek U Prerova  
Sugar Factory, Slovakia

Hid source in sugar factory. Fed and looked after him. Responsible for saving his life. Acted as interpreter and joint commander with source in Czech Paritsan Hq at Prerova (Pronounced Cherov)

17 Mar 45 - 19 May 45  
ANTON KALASUS  
Brodek U Prerova

Wife of this man cooked meals for source and allowed him to bath in house. Supplied food (5 days) washed clothes.

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APPENDIX D

Pro-Axis Personnel

LABOR DRODECK

Tovagov, Slovakia

Well known to Czech people and Vit

Himr

A Czech working for Germans as

Secret agent. Responsible for

capture by Germans of JAKUBCIK and

subsequent torture - 17 Mar 45.

HQ. 15 AF, escape statement, 5 June 1945, Ref: USA/SKP/853.

APPENDIX F

Lt. WILLIAM C. RUNDBAKEN (co-pilot on source a/c) was burned to death on 17 Dec 44 while opening bomb bay doors for crew to bail out. Buried area Bridek, Slovakia.

Cpl. JOHN A. VILLARS (Radio operator) died at post in a/c either through loss of oxygen or flak wounds 17 Dec 44. Buried at KOKORY (4932N-1730E) with military honors by Czech people.

Cpl. RICHARD McGUIRE (Nose gunner) last seen in nose of a/c ready to bail. (info from crew members at ST. VALERY France). Believed killed.

Remainder of crew in Allied hands at ST. VALERY, FRANCE (3 June 45).