

SECRET
AUTH: CG 15AF
Init: JJK
1 April 45

HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520, U. S. Army

1 April 45
USA/SMP/705

ESCAPE STATEMENT

1. MacDonald, W. A., Sgt., 32270762, 764 Sq. 461 Gp.

Born – 20 Sept. 1920

Enlisted – 11 June 42

Home Address – Penns Grove, N.J.

Peacetime Profession – Millwright

MIA – 9 March 45

RTD – 1 April 45

Missions – 7

Sorties - 7

2. On 9 March 45 Source was on a mission to bomb targets in the Vienna area. The aircraft – a B-24 – was piloted by 2nd Lt. P.P. Vilieras.

Owing to a strong headwind, and the fact that the plane was new, excess gas was consumed on the way to the target. Source thinks they flew over the target, but bombs were salvoed in the mountains to lighten the load.

The aircraft returned in formation – the pilot intending to land at Vis, as he had not sufficient fuel to reach base.

Over Yugoslavia at approximately 45°N 1630E, another B-24 flying below Source in formation came up hitting Sources aircraft. All four engines cut out. The ball turret, bomb bay doors and nose were smashed, ball gunner and navigator were trapped in their positions.

With all engines out the pilot put the plane into a dive to maintain air speed, and gave bail out orders.

Source bailed out, and saw six other chutes.

The plane crashed among mountains in the area 46N 1630E.

The other aircraft went straight down, with smoke pouring from the four engines. Source saw no chutes.

3. Never in enemy hands.

4. Source landed in mountainous country in a pine tree and hung about 20' above the ground. During his descent and while hanging in the tree, men had been shooting at Source. His chute was holed, but he was not hit. After releasing his harness, Source dropped to the ground, sustaining only minor cuts, snow cushioning his fall.

After walking a few yards Source was confronted by a “Ustachi” soldier who aimed a rifle at him. Source fired a couple of shots with his .45 and dropped to the ground. When the Ustachi made no movement, Source ran as hard as he could go (he was wearing flying boots and heated clothing and was carrying his G.I. shoes) and hid in the mountains until morning. During the night Source heard shooting in the area where his chute had gone down – he thinks he heard two shots from one .45 pistol. Source spent the next day in the area drinking melted snow and eating some chocolate and chewing gum from his escape kit.

On the third day Source headed SW using the compass on the match case. He traveled through blizzards wearing all his clothing and flying boots, and kept high up in the hills. Source continued like this until the sixth day – eating only food in his escape kit and sleeping in the snow at night. On the 15 March 45, Source encountered a “goather” who gave him his first meal – which consisted of goats milk and bread. Source spent a few hours resting here, and then started off with the man who said he would take Source to a German camp. This man had never heard of “Tito” or of the “Partisans”, but spoke enough English to tell Source that although the Germans would arrest him, that they would treat him well.

Source after getting some food from this man left him, and again headed west until he reached the coast. From here Source was able to look down on a small bay where there was a sunken ship, but as the port appeared otherwise deserted headed east until he reached a farmhouse. Here Source showed the people his new identity card, and obtained some water. By this time Source was carrying his heavy clothing and was wearing his “GI” shoes.

A small girl told Source there were Partisans in Vis, conducted him to another farmer who hid him in a cave and obtained some molasses, bread and eggs, as well as some bean “coffee”. At dusk the farmer accommodated Source in a field and he put on a British battle blouse. A friend arrived – wearing a Partisan star in his hat – and in the middle of the night all three set off toward south in the hills. In the early morning Source became very sick and exhausted and had to be carried to a farmhouse to rest. Here he was put to bed where he remained for two days – (One of the Partisans who was buying him food being captured by the Ustachi in Jablanac (4440N 1455E).

After this man was captured Source was sent off with his original guide and four other Partisans to another village north of Karlobag where Source was housed in a cave. He remained here for about 11 days. Partisans scrounging around the countryside to find the little food they gave Source.

Sources helpers wished to take him across to the island of Pag (4430N 1590E) where, in spite of the 2000 Germans garrisoned there, the Partisans had a system of evacuation by sailing boat to Olib (4425N 1435E).

On the night 29/30 March, Partisans took Source by rowing boat from the mainland (between Karlobag and Jablanac) to the island of Pag.

In broad daylight on 30th March, Source was taken in a sailing boat, with Partisans and one German deserter from Jablanac barracks, to the island of Olib. Here Source was taken to the Partisan Hq. Where he was fed – his first proper meal – and sent him to the British radio station on the island. A message was sent to Zara, and on 31 March Source left on a Partisan ferryboat that stopped at innumerable

island, at one of these islands Source transferred to a British minesweeper that landed him at Zara. From here Source was taken by a "C-47" to Bari, arriving 31 March 1945.

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

5 Incls:

Incl 1 – Ltr. 383.6
2 – App. B
3 – App. C
4 – App. D
5 – App. F.

APPENDIX B

John Rumianof (?) – Partisan soldier of Stari Grad. – Guided Source from the time he landed Jablanac area, fed and looked after him and took him as far as Pag.

Ustachi found out this man had helped Source, and beat up his wife and baby.

(Nikola) Storcevic

K.N.O.O.

Senj

-----Chief boatman near Prizova

Jbrvacko

Priniorje

Yugoslavia

APPENDIX C

Source had an old type plastic escape kit. His water bag fouled up and would not hold water. Source made hole in plastic case and used as a water bottle.

Benzidrine tablets were useful.

Chocolate was used, and this kept Source going for six days with some chewing gum.

A metal case would be an improvement as snow could be melted over a fire. Gum is excellent – more is needed.

Source had two maps of France, Germany, N. Italy, but none of Yugoslavia in his escape purse.

APPENDIX D

Source heard medium and heavy flak batteries (German) on islands of Goli (4452N 1450E) – Prvic (4455N 1450E) and Krk (4500N 1435E) – (7-8 Mar 45).

Partisans in these areas on mainland are waiting for an Allied invasion from Zara within the next few days. (8 Mar 45).

Reports of many Ustachi atrocities to Partisans – Killing and maiming women and children.

APPENDIX F

No news of remainder of crew, six eutes seen to open. Pilot – co-pilot on the aircraft when Source bailed out, as well as the Bombardier.