

(2)

SECRET - AMERICAN
MOST SECRET - BRITISH

HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
P/W and X Detachment
Military Intelligence Service

E & E REPORT NO 260
EVASION IN FRANCE

14 December 1943

Arthur M VETTER, 2d Lt, O-795862
350th Bomb Squadron, 100th Bomb Group

MIA: 15 September 1943
Arrived in Spain:
18 November 1943
Arrived in Gibraltar:
2 December 1943
Arrived in UK:
11 December 1943

AGE: 25 years
LENGTH OF SERVICE: 2 years
HOME ADDRESS: 1006 Moyer Street
PITTS, Pennsylvania

MEMBERS OF CREW (This information checked with PWIB)

PILOT	O-795862	2d Lt	Arthur M VETTER	NARRATOR
CO-PILOT	O-741943	2d Lt	Donald Glenn SMITH	MIA
NAVIGATOR	O-734944	2d Lt	Wendell L McCONAHA	MIA
BOMBARDIER	O-76542	2d Lt	James G BORMUTH	311 in Neutral Country
RADIO OPERATOR	33237317	T/Sgt	John M WAGNER	E & E #254
TOP TURRET GUNNER	35333680	T/Sgt	Orval L BARSONS	MIA
BALL TURRET GUNNER	31172594	S/Sgt	Edward W FONTAINE	548275 IN NEUTRAL COUNTRY
WAIST GUNNER	32560807	S/Sgt	Edward M DALY	MIA
WAIST GUNNER	16073581	S/Sgt	Robert C TRIGG	MIA
TAIL GUNNER	37461810	S/Sgt	Warren G LUSH	in Neutral Country

SIX FLAK
HITS

We left THORPE-ABBOTS on 15 September at 1700 hours to bomb PARIS. We were over the target when we received six flak hits that sounded just like pebbles on a tin roof. Numbers two and three engines were knocked out. The electrical system was also hit, and I was therefore unable to feather the engines. I had to open the cowl flaps to keep the fire down. Every time I let them down the flames shot up again. The engines ran wild. All the vacuum instruments were out because the vacuum line was cut. The engineer was hit. The interphone, radio and turrets were useless, of course, after the electrical system was hit. Out momentarily, however, carried us through and the bombs were dropped on the lead ship.

FORCED TO LEAVE
FORMATION

Number four engine was not working properly. The aircraft had a strong tendency to veer to the right. I couldn't keep altitude of 20,000 feet. We left formation and started down. Fighters came into attack us at 10,000 feet. The tail gunner and waist gunners kept them off; I think the tail gunner got one. At 6,000 feet we ran into clouds. We had been flying into the sun, because the instruments were not working. When we got into the clouds I must have made a 180° turn, for when we got out of the cloud I looked back and the sunset was behind me. The fighters must have been as tricked by the maneuver as we were, for we had no more trouble with them.

maneuver

NOTE - ON
CREW IN
ORDER?

ORDERS
CREW TO
BALE-OUT

We were flying at 4,000 feet when we came out off the clouds. The Co-pilot, obeying orders, went back through the aircraft to tell the crew to bail out. ^{LT SAUNDERS} He helped the wounded engineer into his chute. He gave ^{THE} Sgt ^{SAUNDERS} a shot of morphine before jumping out the bomb-bay with him. Everyone cleared the ship safely.

GREETED BY
FRENCH

I jumped at 3,000 feet and opened my chute immediately. I saw no chutes on my way down, but it was getting pretty dark. As I landed I saw my plane crash and burn. I landed, without any difficulties, in a back yard. A crowd of Frenchmen were waiting. One took my chute and Mae West and ran off with it. I asked where I should go and was told to head for a nearby wood. One of the crowd spoke a little English and this helped to make matters clear. I ran a half mile to the woods and sat down. When it got really dark three men came for me. I was taken to a kitchen where I was joined by Sgt WAGNER (E & E #254) and another member of my crew. Sgt WAGNER had broken his ankle while parachuting. We were fed and given civilian clothes. We spent the night in a hay-loft.

HIDES IN
THICKET TO
AVOID SEARCH

The next morning we were hidden in a nearby thicket. This was done because the Germans had started the search for us that morning by going into the barns in the vicinity. The news travelled to our helpers and we were moved. A light German plane flew very low over the area. It was also searching for us. We had taken bread and wine with us when we went to the thicket and that was all we had to eat all day, as the French were afraid of betraying our location by bringing us food. Somehow we were not hungry anyway.

Journey
ARRANGED

That night the French returned after dark. We walked across the fields to a deserted farmhouse. From here on our journey was arranged.

Compiled by: *Dorothy A. Smith*

Approved by:

Dorothy A. Smith
DOROTHY A SMITH
1st Lt, WAC

W.S. Holt

W S HOLT
Lt Col, AC
Commanding

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24 December 1943

APPENDIX "B" TO E AND E REPORT NO. 260

1. The following information has been obtained after an interview with a sergeant who evaded capture by the enemy after being in enemy-occupied territory.

2. Further circulation of this information may be made, but when doing so, information as to the source may not be divulged.

Statement of information covering period from 15 September 1943
to 2 December 1943

- a. Twelve locomotives, several flak cars, and a freight train loaded with motorized equipment were observed in the railroad yards at CREIL on 10 October.
- b. There is a German airfield at CREIL. (Hearsay)
- c. Several hundred men in the uniform of the Luftwaffe and a large number of German Infantry soldiers were observed waiting for a train in CREIL on 10 October.
- d. The French in the vicinity of CLEMONT are well organized to give assistance at the time of the invasion. More ammunition is needed by this group. They have some American made M-3 machine guns, but are short of ammunition for them. This organization has plans laid to take strong points from the German Army of Occupation. (Observation, September-October)
- e. The French fear a victory over Germany by the Russians alone. They say the French communists become more powerful with each Russian success.