

SECRET - AMERICAN
 MOST SECRET - BRITISH

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

E & E REPORT NO. 275
EVASION IN FRANCE

~~TARGET: Paris, 15 Sept 43~~

18 December 1943

Edward W FONTAINE, S/Sgt, 31172594
 350 Bomb Squadron, 100 Bomb Group

MIA: 16 September 1943

~~Arrived in Spain~~

~~31 October 1943~~

~~Arrived in Gibraltar~~

~~15 December 1943~~

Arrived in UK:

18 December 1943

AGE: 26 years
 Length of Service: 17 months
 Home Address: 29 Hillside Avenue
 WEST WARWICK, R.I.

MEMBERS OF CREW: (This information checked with PWIB)

PILOT	0-795862	2d Lt	Arthur M VETTER	E&E 260 ✓	
CO-PILOT	0-741943	2d Lt	Donald Glenn SMITH	MIA	P/W
NAVIGATOR	0-734944	2d Lt	Wendell L McCONNARA	MIA	
BOMBARDIER	0-76542	2d Lt	James G BORNUTH	IN NEUTRAL COUNTRY	
RADIO OPERATOR	33237317	T/Sgt	John W WAGNER	E&E 250 ✓	
TOP TURRET GUNNER	35333680	T/Sgt	Orvall PARSONS	MIA	
BALL TURRET GUNNER	31172594	S/Sgt	Edward W FONTAINE	NARRATOR	
WAIST GUNNER	32560807	S/Sgt	Edward M DALY	MIA	
WAIST GUNNER	16073581	S/Sgt	Robert G TRIGG	MIA	
TAIL GUNNER	37461810	S/Sgt	Warren G LUSH	IN NEUTRAL COUNTRY	

PARIS -
 15 SEPTEMBER
 1943

We left formation over the target and I realized that something must have gone wrong. As soon as we were alone the fighters came in to attack us; most of them came in at 6 o'clock. The tail gunner did a lot of firing. Sgt LUSH stopped firing and I didn't hear anything from the waist guns; I was puzzled, because I could still see the enemy aircraft coming in to the attack. I switched my turret around, opened the door, and looked up. The left waist gunner was kicking out the escape hatch while the radio operator, top turret, and right waist gunners were waiting with their chutes on. I decided my inter-com must have been shot out, so I came up out of my turret. I put on my chute and then took over one of the idle waist guns. I must have been busy firing for another ten minutes after that. A piece of metal from some part of the plane blew past and out my hand, but it was nothing serious. T/Sgt WAGNER went back to the radio room, but he turned right around and came back to the waist. He spoke to S/Sgt DALY who jumped, yelling at me as he left: "I'll see you in PARIS." T/Sgt WAGNER and S/Sgt LUSH jumped right after him. The assistant engineer came back to the waist and I asked him if the bale-out order had been given. He said "Yes", so I jumped, we must have been flying at 10,000 feet at the time.

TAKES OVER
 WAIST GUN

BALES OUT
 AT 10,000 ft

At 8,000 feet, I opened my chute. I saw our aircraft in the distance and it turned around, then it disappeared in a cloud. I could see three chutes beside my own, but they were not near me. The chute seemed slow

LANDS IN
COW PASTURE

in opening, when I pulled the rip-cord. I slipped my hand into the case to help it along, and the silk bellowed out; there was no jerk as it opened. I smoked a cigarette and looked about me, I was over farm land. I knew I was going to roll up my chute and run the minute I hit the ground, but aside from that I had no plans made when I landed on my feet between two startled cows. I wadded my chute into a tight pack and hid it in the tall grass. Then I started to run.

SPENDS NIGHT
IN OPEN

I stopped running after 100 yards because it was quite dark. I hid in the tall grass, and looked toward my hidden chute. Two people walked up to it, but it was impossible to tell whether they were soldiers or civilians. I stayed still and as everything was quiet. I spent the night where I was. I lay there fitfully sleeping and smoking and did not open my escape kit.

GIVEN
CIVILIAN
CLOTHING

At 0730 hours the next day I moved and hid beside a haystack to study my maps. A young boy called to me and then came over. He was carrying civilian clothes into which I immediately changed. Then we went off to get bread and coffee. I speak French so we had no trouble whatsoever in understanding one another. He told me that there were no Germans in the vicinity, but that he could do no more for me, as his was a poor family without contacts.

FOLLOWS
ADVICE BY
I.O.

I started on a compass course south toward PARIS intending to continue on to Spain. I walked through the fields and kept off the roads. I came to a small village and walked through it without being spoken to, although everyone stared at me. When I got to the end of the village I turned back and went to a house where I had seen a couple working. We had been told at base by our I.O. that we should spot a likely place for help and then go back to it later. I think this, as it later turned out, was one of the most useful things that I was taught. I asked the couple for water. The man said their water was not very good. His wife then told him to give me beer. He filled my rubber water bottle with it, and then as he handed it back he looked at me and laughed, saying: "Americans like their beer, don't they?" I left him then and walked two miles down the road to another small village.

RECOGNIZED
AS AMERICAN

I could see large building in the village so I was afraid to go any further. I thought the Germans might be using them as factories. I lay in the sun by a haystack waiting for night-fall. Two women came by in a cart. One of them asked me if I worked in the fields. I answered no. She said: "Are you the American?" When I said "Yes" she told me to come with her. I was taken down the road to a farmhouse. That night a man and woman, to whom my helpers had phoned, came and picked me up. I then learned how everyone knew about me.

GERMAN
SEARCH

Just after I received the beer and started down the road, the German patrols started to look for me. The soldiers went to the house I had just left, but the man and wife said that they had seen no strangers that day. Later, however, a friend of the couple came by. The man who had given me the beer said: "Oh your should have been by earlier - you could have seen an American aviator!" The visiting friend immediately decided to help me. He searched the highways for me without luck. As a matter of fact I saw him, but not knowing who he was, hid behind a haystack. He told several people, whom he knew, about me. He asked them, if they should find me, to hold me until he could contact me. This is just what happened, the two women saw me and kept me for him till night.

SEARCHED FOR
BY FRENCH

JOURNEY
ARRANGED

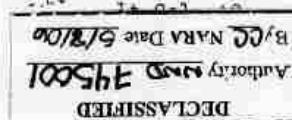
My enterprising friend took me to a home where I spent nineteen uneventful days. At the end of this time the rest of my journey was arranged.

Compiled by:

DOROTHY A SMITH
1st Lt, WAC

Approved by:

W.S. Holt
W S HOLT



REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

SECRET - AMERICAN
MOST SECRET - BRITISH

HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
F/7 and X Detachment
Military Intelligence Service

18 December 1943

APPENDIX "B" TO B AND E REPORT NO. 275

1. The following information has been obtained in 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 in that case it is important not to divulge any particulars about the source.

Statement of information covering the period from 16 September 1943
to 18 December 1943

- a. The anti-aircraft guns were moved from the BEAUVAIS airfield to CREIL in early October. Single and two engine fighters were also transferred. (Hearsay 4 October 1943)
- b. There is an ammunition dump in the Chantilly forest. It is constantly supplied with ammunition for canon. (Hearsay 4 October 1943)
- c. German soldiers have bought out most of the civilian clothes in north France. (Hearsay)
- d. There is an aircraft motor repair shop at TOULOUSE. Approximately 600 people are employed. They work on fighter-plane motors. The factory works at night. The factory is in the southern part of the town on the rue de docteur Jean Arlean. (Observation 6-15 October 1943)
- e. There is a big training field near TOULOUSE. Bomber crews and fighter pilots are trained here in day and night flying.
- f. All the French are waiting for the invasion. In a house, not connected with resistance organization, 30 to 35 boxes of gun-powder were observed. They were stored in the attic until needed.
- g. The Germans ransacked the houses evacuated during the fall of France. The sinks were stopped up and the taps left running. All eggs on hand were smashed against the wall. Furniture was slashed and the chair legs were sawn off. (Hearsay and Observation - October.)