

5 July 1944

E & E REPORT NO. 763
ESCAPE IN ITALYGlen H KEIRSEY, S/Sgt, 38089004
(10 Missions)
350 Bomb Squadron, 100 Bomb GroupTARGET: FIRST SHUTTLE
RAID TO AFRICA
MIA: 17 August 1943
Arrived in UK:
22 June 1944MEMBERS OF CREW: (This information checked with PWIB)

PILOT	0-729857	1st Lt Ronald W HOLLERBECK	P/W
CO-PILOT	T-60810	F/O John L WILLIAMS	P/W
NAVIGATOR	0-667465	2d Lt Harold L WEINTRAUB	P/W
BOMBARDIER	0-731359	2d Lt Zeak M BUCKNER, Jr	P/W
RADIO OPERATOR	34290593	T/Sgt Emile A REINHERR	P/W
TOP TURRET GUNNER	14062348	T/Sgt Rush S MINTZ	P/W
BALL TURRET GUNNER	38089004	S/Sgt Glen H KEIRSEY	NARRATOR
WAIST GUNNER	20123753	S/Sgt William A ROUSE	P/W
WAIST GUNNER	33057029	S/Sgt John Q PACIOTTI	P/W
TAIL GUNNER	16034059	Sgt Thomas E FLOUNDERS	P/W

BAILS OUT
OVER
ITALY

Before we reached target our load of English incendiaries was set ^{on} fire by a 20 mm and had to be salvoed. After target, number four had to be feathered and number three ran away. We salvoed all the excess equipment in order to clear the ALPS and were over ITALY at 3000 feet when the bail-out order was given. I pulled my ripcord as soon as I had cleared the ship and landed in a cornfield on a cross-roads near a village. By the time I was out of my harness there were people on all the roads and they had started across the field. I tried to hide, but they surrounded me.

CAPTURED
BY
GERMANS

A scout car drew up, ~~and~~ four Germans got out and searched me for a gun. I was then put in a truck with six Germans. Thirty minutes later S/Sgt ROUSE was put in the truck. An Italian Captain in the cavalry came and claimed us. There was a long argument and we were finally turned over to him. We were marched to the village with three Italian foot soldiers surrounded by the captain and a dozen mounted soldiers. After a half hour in the local jail we were taken to cavalry Hq. Here we joined the tail gunner.

INTERROGATION

A colonel, with a captain as interpreter, interrogated each one of us separately. He asked name, rank, ASN, unit, target, type of A/C and number of men in A/C. They were very nice and there was no pressure when we would not answer. They asked the tail gunner more questions, because he was younger looking, but we had had a good chance to brief him. We went back to the cells and a civilian kept coming in for information. I told him to get out and let me sleep, ~~and~~ he finally left me alone.

ENTIRE
CREW
P/W

We were put in a truck again. In it we found the bombardier, radio operator, engineer and the other waist gunner. We were driven to an airfield where we joined the pilot, co-pilot, and navigator. The next day we took the train to MILAN and so to ROME to be interrogated in a monastery. All the enlisted men were interrogated at once and then sent to PG 54. (Attended)

PG 54

We were the only Americans in this camp, ~~and~~ The British were all very good to us, and gave us plenty of tea and biscuits. The crew was put into one building. There were 99 ^{other} men in this barracks, ~~and~~ each had a straw mattress and one blanket. We were here three weeks. Once a day we were fed macaroni and beans with a small slice of cheese, vegetable, ^{and} 200 grams of bread. Twice a week we were given a Red Cross parcel to share with another man. There were plenty of books, ~~and~~ classes had been organized. There was a band, and many debates. The worst thing was the shortage of water. What water we had was cold, and 1800 men made the place pretty dusty.

ARMISTICE

On 8 September we received news of the armistice from the RSM. The Italian colonel, ^{in charge} said we were to remain in camp until our troops came, which would be a matter of a few days. The next day we heard there had been a ~~landing~~ ^{landing} at Rome, and became very restless, but the guards would let no one out. On 10 September German paratroops took over an airfield 10 miles away, and our guards vanished. The RSM said there was food in the camp for ten days and that leaving or staying was up to the individual. On 11 September nine of us, with food supplies for several days, overcoats, blankets, and a change of clothing, cut the wires and left. Our plan was to reach the mountains and go on to Naples through the foothills.

ADVISED
TO LIVE
IN HILLS

We walked 10 miles E that night and slept in a woods. The next day we traveled down the road for 5 miles, when an Italian stopped us to say that the Germans were coming up the road 5 miles away. We took off into the foothills and made camp. One of the men contacted an Italian, who told him that a London broadcast said that all P/W were to stay in the hills. Food would be dropped to them by A/C. A few nights later two of the party went to town and listened to the radio. We decided that our troops were still on the way and traded some clothes for ~~a few loaves of~~ bread so that we could hold out until then.

← Soon after this BADOGLIO told the Italians to feed all escaped P/W. Dozens of people with food immediately came looking for us. On 19 September the Germans rounded up 40 to 50 escaped prisoners in the district. After this the fascists became active and used to lie in wait around the few drinking wells.

GERMANS
RECAPTURE
MANY

← The civilians told us to help ourselves to their orchards and we lived in the open in the woods. About 21 September food got very scarce and the rains started. On 29 September six of the party headed south to join the lines. The rest of us had dysentery and were to follow as soon as we were able. On 1 October, however, we contacted a farmer who promised to keep us in food, and who said that our troops were advancing. He dyed our clothes for us, and we decided to stick it out. We spent our days in the bush and slept at night in the straw tool sheds in the fields. On 10 November another German drive rounded up 50 men who had remained in these sheds during the daytime. On 21 November three of us were standing on the edge of a field when two Germans appeared and yelled "come here" in Italian. Two of us ran and they fired three times without success. The third remained and was captured. We decided it was time to push on.

UNDERGROUND
CONTACT

Our shoes were in such bad shape, however, that one of the men went to town to have them repaired and hear the news. It took a week to have the shoes repaired, and while waiting he met a man who had definite connections with the underground. He gave us civilian clothes and told us we were not to move off, but remain to help in the battle when the troops did get through. We still spent our days in the open, but we now had our evening meal and spent the night in peasant homes on the outskirts of the village. On 17 December a farmer showed us a 200-lb package that had been dropped for us. There were 30 men to share it, and from it I got a new pair of shoes. *Stenall 2*

~~FROM~~
VALUE OF
LEARNING
THE
LANGUAGE

Sometime after Christmas I was walking down the mountains at sundown with a friend, when we ran right into the German commandant. He said something in German, and we said good-evening in Italian. He then asked us, in Italian, where we were going. We said to the village. He asked where we worked ~~and~~ in the fields ~~then~~ where we lived, ~~in the village~~. Then he asked for our papers. We said they were in the village. He shook his head sadly, ~~and then~~ but suddenly reached into my companion's shirt pocket and took out a picture of his wife and baby. He asked if it were his baby and on learning that it was, told us to be sure and carry our papers with us in the future. The only thing that saved us was that we had picked up more Italian than he had. After this encounter we came down the mountain later of an evening and went out earlier in the morning than had been our practice. We used a different route every day.

TIME
PASSES

After 1 February the Fascists and spies grew more active and men were picked up all the time. We no longer slept in the village, and we changed sheds every night. Our underground contact was caught by a woman spy. After that we did our own cooking. The Italians gave us chiefly favi, a bean which was hard after four hours of boiling, and polenta, the top layer of which was made with olive oil and garlic. Sparrows, robins, and snails ~~augmented~~ *supplemented* the diet.

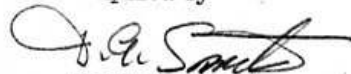
AS WE WERE GATHERING FIREWOOD,

To pass the time we read. I had a New Testament which I read ~~three~~ ^{two} times, and another in the party had taken the complete works of Shakespeare ~~out of~~ ^{out of} the prison camp ~~when he left. ON 29 FEBRUARY~~ ^{THE WOMAN SAID} ~~ONE OF THE MEN WITH WHOM I HAD~~ ^{CAUGHT ONE} ~~ORIGINALLY~~ ^{ESCAPED,}

ALLIES
TAKE
OVER

On 1 April the Allies bombed out the people who had been feeding us and the also had to take to the fields. We traveled SE for two days through the mountain brush, but when we could find no help we returned. Time went by and the searches grew more thorough. In ~~May~~ ^{one} of my companions took sick and I ~~became~~ ^{became} doctor after having been cook for a long time. On 6 June we heard that ROME had been taken, ~~so we gathered our supplies and moved SE well into the hills.~~ On the night of 8 June the last Germans left the village. The next morning we went down to meet the British patrol and gave their captain our military information. Then we asked what they were going to do with us. We were laughingly told that we had taken care of ourselves for 9 months and should be able to continue to do so until the main body of troops moved in. We hung around the village for 3 days and then hitched a ride to ROME where we were turned over to the proper authorities.

Compiled by



DOROTHY A SMITH
Capt, WAC

Approved by

W S HOLT
Lt Col, AC
Commanding

APPENDIX "D"

- 1&2. AIDS BOX & PURSE: I had no use for my aids box and purse as I was captured immediately. I was able to hide the purse in the cornfield before the Italians got to me.
3. PHOTOGRAPHS: My pictures had been taken but never delivered to me.
4. LECTURES: I was lectured on evasion several times at my base, and found the instructions to contact one person at a time particularly useful.

APPENDIX "B"

All military information was given to an operational unit in the field, which was in a position to use it.

SECRET

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

E & L REPORT NO 763

EVASION IN
Escape in Italy

KEIRSEY-G.H. S/SGT. 38089504

(Name) (Rank) (ASN)

10 (No of Missions)

350TH

(Squadron)

100TH

(Group)

(Date)

First
TARGET: SHUTTLE RP1010

Date Missing in Action: 8-17-48

Date Arrived in UK: 6-22-44

MEMBERS OF CREW: (This information checked with PWIB)

Indicate what happened to
each man
and how you know
PRISONER

PILOT 1ST LT. HOLLENBECK - R.
CO-PILOT FOI WILLIAMS - JOHN.
NAVIGATOR 2nd LT. WEINTRAUB - HAROLD
BOMBARDIER 2nd ... BUCKNER - Z. M.
RADIO OPERATOR T/SGT. REINHERRP - E. H.
TOP TURRET GUNNER T/SGT. MINTZ - R. S.
MID TURRET GUNNER S/SGT. KEIRSEY G. H.
WAIST GUNNER S/SGT. ROUSE - W. H.
WAIST GUNNER S/SGT. POCIOTTI. J. G.
TAIL GUNNER SGT. FLOUNDERS. T. F.

were you wounded?

NO

UK

Over
File

SECRET

HEADQUARTERS TWELFTH AIR FORCE
A. F. O. 350

SECRET

By auth of
CG, Twelfth AF
18 June 1944 *LDC*
(Inl)

18 June 1944.

SUBJECT: Orders.

TO : S/Sgt GLEN H. KEIRSEY, 38089004, 337th Bomb Sq, 100th Bomb Gp.

PAC letter, AG 383.6/384 A-C, Hq NATOUSA, 8 Feb 1944, and letter, AG 383.6/434 A-C, Hq NATOUSA, 1 March 1944, S/Sgt GLEN H. KEIRSEY, 38089004, 337th BOMB SQ, 100TH BOMB GP, having escaped from enemy territory, WF without delay, by mil, naval or commercial aircraft (par 3, AR 55-120) fr pres sta to Hq ETOUSA, United Kingdom, rptg upon arrival thereat to AC of S, G-2, for further instructions. Baggage to accompany EM by air will be limited to 65 pounds. After departure from the geographic limits of the NATO, a flat per diem of \$7.00 in lieu of subs is atzd for travel to UK, in acc with existing law and regulations. During such periods as govt billeting and messing facilities are furnished, per diem alws is suspended. EM will be acquainted with the applicable parts of Sec VIII, AR 380-5. TDN. 91-66 P 431-02 A 0425-24.

By command of Major General CANNON:

L. D. Cummings
L. D. CUMMINGS,
Lt. Col., A. G. D.,
Asst. Adjutant General.

DISTRIBUTION:

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4 - 337th Bomb Sq, 100th Bomb Gp
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SECRET

CONFIDENTIAL

HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES ARMY
OFFICE OF THE A. C. OF S., G-2

763

DATE: 25 June 1944

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I, ERNEST J. IRWIN, JR., 1st Lt., Ord., O-292374

hereby certify that I have known and have been associated with

GLEN H. KEIRSEY, S/Sgt., AG, 38089004

prior to his being reported missing in action over enemy territory.

The person whose signature and right thumb print appear hereon is the individual referred to above.

Glen H. Keirsey

Ernest J. Irwin Jr.

RIGHT THUMB PRINT:



=====
The individual whose signature and right thumb print appear hereon has been identified to the satisfaction of this office as GLEN H. KEIRSEY, S/Sgt., AG, 38089004 (350 Bomb Squadron - 100 Bomb Group) previously reported missing in action over enemy territory.