ESCAPE STATEMENT

On 15 January 1945 Sources: Cpl. Noon, ball gunner; and Cpl. Farris nose gunner, were on a mission to bomb the south M/Y at Vienna. Sources' aircraft, a B-24, was flying in last position of last box. It was hit, probably by flak, halfway between the IP and the target. Sources do not know extent of damage but say that No. 3 engine and then No. 2 engine cut out, the aircraft began to lose altitude. The bombardier salvaged his bombs and the pilot headed for Vis. Over Lake Balaton, more flak was encountered and another engine cut out at 1415 hours, at 15,000 feet, in the vicinity of Brod, the pilot, Lt. Bolmgren, gave the order to bail out. The whole crew left the aircraft which Sources heard crash and explode below them. They were never in the hands of the enemy.

ESCAPE STATEMENT OF CREW

Mission was to MOOSBIERBAUM, 1st February 1945. On the bomb run, just before bombs away, and in the rally, the aircraft was hit by flak and very heavily damaged. Number 2 engine was knocked out and a piece of flak jammed the controls. The cross feed was cut and gas was leaking out of the controls. The pilot made a 180° turn and he and the copilot bailed out in the same area. A glider landed safely, although the upper turret gunner broke his leg and ankle and is in a Russian hospital. The aircraft went down in a series of gentle turns, then hit open country and blew up. Although two single shots with a submachine gun were fired at the pilot by Russian guards, no difficulty was experienced in identifying themselves as Americans by the crew members. No bad treatment was received by any of them, and they were all brought together promptly at a hotel in PECS, where they stayed for sixteen days, when they were taken to CAVAOL. On the 23rd they were taken to BAJA, where they took a train for BUCHAREST and reported to the American Mission. They left there on the 29th March 1945 by RAF C-47 for BARI.

SUGGESTIONS

1. If possible, crew members should avoid bailing out close to the battle line, since forward patrols are trigger happy. It is best to go as deep into Hungary or Northeastern Yugoslavia as the conditions of the aircraft permits.

2. Keep your parachute if you bail out behind the Russian lines. It will prove useful to you in many ways.

3. A little basic knowledge of German and French will be very helpful. Some time spent studying phrase books in these languages would amply repay the time spent.

4. If you carry a lighter, be sure to carry extra flints, since matches are almost unobtainable.

5. More instruction should be given to crew members in correct jumping procedure. These crew members had been lectured by an ex-paratrooper, and found the information derived from the lecture invaluable.

JOHN F. HOLSTUS
Captain, A.C.
Escape Officer