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150-BOMB-380-SU-0P
22 SEPT 1943

SEPTEMBER 1943

P.R.C.

380 BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON

Classification changed to
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
By authority of the
Commanding General T.A.U

W. J. Paul Col USAF

26 APR 49

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MICROFILMED

Escape and Evasion

50-50MB-380-51-01 (Grottaminarda)

~~SECRET~~
(Equals British Most Secret)ACCOUNT OF ESCAPENAME Loy, R. L. PFC.ASN 14063684ORGANIZATION 380th Bombardment Squadron, 310th Bombardment Group,
A.P.O. # 920 .MISSION & DATE Grottaminarda Road Bridge, September 22, 1943.TYPE A/C, POSITION IN CREW B-25, Tail Gunner.BAILLED OUT AT 41 deg. 03 min. N. , 15 deg. 09 min. E. on 22nd September 1943
at approximately 1201 hrs., landed at approximately
41 deg. N. & 15 deg. 13 min. E.REACHED SAFETY 26th September 1943 at approximately 1400 hours by
contacting Canadian out post at Atalla (40 deg. 53 min N,
15 deg. 39 min. E.).NARRATIVE

Interviewer's Note:- This was PFC R. L. Loy's first mission. Heretofore he has been in the Medical Section, and has had no experience in map reading or pilotage. The interviewer will be forced to footnote statements with estimated corrections.

Our A/C was hit by flak on the bomb run and it sounded as though it had been ripped in two. The A/C assumed a violent diving attitude and I felt reasonably certain that the front half of the A/C had been knocked off. Immediately I crawled out of the tail. When I reached the escape hatch, the R/O had already bailed out and the Upper Turret Gunner was preparing to jump. I followed him out without any trouble.

con't.

My next recollection was the gentle to and fro motion once the 'chute had opened. I landed in a clump of scrub trees and in a matter of minutes about thirty Italian peasants gathered around and greeted me with kissing and hand shaking. The Italians helped free the 'chute from the trees and hid it. One of their number spoke English. He took me to his home, fed me, and patched up my scratches. He ordered the crowd to disperse and return to their homes. I spent the night in his house. He gave me civilian clothing which I donned, keeping my shoes, trousers, and "dog-tags". He refused to take payment which I offered from my escape purse.

The next morning, September 23, three Italian soldiers passed by and the farmer learned that they intended to return to their homes in Sicily. I asked the farmer if they might have any objections to my accompanying them. They gave a favorable response and the farmer bid me off with a piece of bread and some salami.

(Evader did not obtain the farmer's name nor could he remember the name of the area in which he landed. He didn't think it wise to carry any written information and apparently Italian appellations had little meaning for him.)

We started walking with the intent of skirting enemy positions to the South.

(Direction probably Northeast. It is the opinion of the interviewer that he read the compass, escape kit type, in reverse. His place of contact with friendly troops indicates that generally his trek was Eastward and any skirting maneuver would have to be to the North East.)

We subsisted largely on grapes and figs. After walking approximately fifteen (?) miles we stopped in a little clearing with three houses.

con't.

Here an Italian civilian who claimed to have been an American citizen insisted that we stay in his home for the night. He fed us, bedded us for the night, and in the morning we were off again. We were some where East of Foggia.

(As before, his directions were reversed. Bisaccia must have been the town rather than Foggia. He said it was hilly country and that the town in the distance seemed to be built on a ridge. Foggia is on the plain and Bisaccia from the maps could well fit the description of the town he saw.)

We walked all that day steering clear of roads, crossing them only when necessary. I think the direction was approximately Southwest. (East?)

Only two enemy M/T's were seen. We travelled for about fourteen hours covering an estimated fifteen to twenty miles that day, (September 24).

(His position is estimated to have been about eight miles East of Bisaccia.)

During the trip we were able to buy fresh eggs and fruit from the farmers. We slept in a haystack that night, (September 24).

The next morning, (Sept. 25), we started again at about five o'clock, still heading in a Southwest direction.

(? East or perhaps slightly North of East. He was making no correction for magnetic variation on his compass in addition to reading it backwards.)

At approximately noon we came out on the bank of a river. (Ofanto) It was approximately seventyfive yards wide and looked shallow enough to wade across. A single track R R was on the far bank of the river. As we were about to cross the stream, we spotted two Jerries soaking their feet some distance to our left. We retraced our steps in a small arc to a position farther away from the Jerries.

cont.

The point at which we crossed the river was about four hundred yards from a small station and rail siding to our right. Off to our left in a distance the single track R R entered a tunnel. To our right the largest hill in the area was topped by a cross.

(After inspecting a 1-100,000 every indication supports the contention that the crossing of the Ofanto River was made at 40 deg. 58 min. N. and 15 deg. 34 min. 30 sec. E.)

As we walked up to the siding about six shells landed in the area behind us and evidently had come from a position farther to the North, Northeast or Northwest.

We slept in a haystack near the siding that night (Sept. 25). The next morning (Sept. 26) civilians informed us that the hill now to our left and ahead of us (Southeast) was held by the Germans. We made a round circuit about the hill along the left bank of the river. We walked until approximately 1400 hours at which time we encountered a Canadian outpost. We covered a lot of distance that morning as the terrain was the best yet for walking.

(After more interpolation it seems most probable that he met the patrol just West of Atella.)

The Canadians took us to Potenza by truck. From here I hitch-hiked to an Allied Airbase and then to El Aouina-A/D by air. I arrived at my home base late in the evening of September 30, 1943.

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DISPOSITION OF ESCAPE AIDS: -

Evader left plane without aid box. Italian money was used in small amounts for the purchase of food. The French money was returned intact. He destroyed all maps but the one for which he had use before leaving the first farmer.

INTERVIEWED BY

Edward P. Meehan
EDWARD P. MEEHAN,
1st Lt., A. C.,
Group P/W Officer.

Date: September 30, 1943.