
More information on the Innsbruck Mission June 13, 1944

Continued from Torretta Flyer Number #27 Winter-Spring 1995, pages 18-32

The son of Richard Olson, (deceased) has joined the Association and relates more information on his father's crew. They were shot down on their 13th mission on June 13, 1944. They were flying Vivacious Lady 42-94741 (illustrated in Torretta Flyer No #27 page 31) one of the six shot down that day, but the only one from the 826 squadron.

The crew trained at Boise, Idaho before flying to Italy.

The crew flying that day are shown with their disposition.

2/Lt Walter E Chapman-Bombardier (Escapee)
2/Lt John Hassan-Navigator (Escapee)
Sgt Irwin Hansen-Nose Gunner (KIA)
S/Sgt Alvin T Houpt-Upper Gunner (Survived the war)
T/Sgt Frederick S Howland-Engineer (Escapee)
2/Lt Richard Olson Co-Pilot (POW Stalag Luft III)
1/Lt Robert R Remington-Pilot (Survived War)
Sgt Edwin G Rogers-Ball Gunner (KIA)
S/Sgt William B Snyder-Radio Operator (unknown)
S/Sgt Richard R Stokes-Tail Gunner (KIA)

In our archives the following Escape and Evasion Reports were found:

Escape Statement Walter E Chapman

Walter E Chapman 2nd Lt. 826th Sq. 484th BG
Age 23 Missions 24 Duty On A/C Bombardier RTD July 25
1944. Never In Enemy Hands.

On 13 June, while on way to target of Munich passed over Italian coast at Lake Marono when engineer told pilot that No. 1 engine was smoking and throwing oil. It was getting worse so ten minutes later pilot also tried to contact fighters. Dropped out of formation and started to turn back. They were attacked by 20 ME 109s in the Udine area. Gunners got 2 ME 109s and two probables. Source was coming up to flight deck when there started a fire in the bomb bay. Learned later two engines were also on fire. Opened doors and was shoved out by the other members of crew who were trying to get out. Saw four other chutes above him and saw plane crash into ocean off shore. Learned later that in all seven chutes

came out and believes the other four had fallen into Fascist hands who turned them over to Germans.

Landed about three miles from small town in farming area. Was gathering up chute when farmer ran up and took chute and went away. Three or more came up and undressed source and one farmer took off his clothes and gave it to source to wear. Brought him food and one farmer led him to a cave near a river. From map in escape kit figured out where he was and next morning started to follow river, northward. A peasant woman stopped him and indicated he shouldn't go any farther. Turned back and came up a landing. Went into farmhouse and farmer rowed him across river. He started walking when a farmer approached him and indicated that there was an Englishman near. Source followed and came upon a South African who told him there was another American in the vicinity. Took source to a farmhouse and there was his navigator, Lt John Hassan. Later that night a farmer brought in T/Sgt Fred Holland their engineer. The South African told them he'd get in touch with a "rebel" as they wanted to get to Yugoslavia. That night the SA brought an Italian "rebel" to see them. He explained the situation as well as he could and said he'd return the next day. However when he came back the next day he said it was impossible to get out. Source later found out he became suspicious because of the questions the Americans had asked. However, finally said he'd take them out that Saturday. In the meantime the people gave them what aid they could and on Saturday the "rebel" arrived with a truck. After hiding them in it, proceeded in a northeast direction and stopped finally at a farmhouse where the three Americans got out. Another farmer took over there and led them across river to a spot where they met more partisans. The Partisans took them to Partisan headquarters where they spent the night. Spent night in area and the next day were taken to an English mission. An American pilot and a New Zealander were there and after three days with six French POWs who escaped, started in a southeastern direction. After four days arrived at a R.R. where after two attempts at night got across it and on 27 June arrived at Semic. After attempting twice to proceed further were finally taken by a Partisan division who was going that way to the air strip. Arrived there in two days and on the night of the 24th was taken by C-47 to Bari, arriving there on 25 July 1944.

Appendix B

Destroyed names and a letter of people in Lake Marano area who helped out at one time when the Germans were close to capturing them in town of Matlika. Name of South African who helped was Kruger.

Appendix C

Airdrome east of Gorizia used by German bombers and fighters. Also noticed three ME109s patrolling area about ten in the morning and two in the afternoon. People in area said stragglers were almost always attacked coming back in that area.