

Erwin Derold WISSENBACK, 19004589, T/Sgt (Temporary).
367 Bomb Sq., 306 Bomb Gp.

2

MISSION: Target LILLE, FRANCE, 9 Oct 1942.

AGE: 22.

LENGTH OF SERVICE: 2 years.

PEACETIME PROFESSION: Student.

HOME ADDRESS: Route No. 3, Box 1130, KLAMATH FALLS, Oregon, U.S.A.

OTHER MEMBERS OF CREW:-

John W. OLSON, Capt., 0-439684,	Pilot.	Killed.
Joseph N. GATES, 2nd Lt., 0-76211, 726211 <i>incorrect</i>	Co-Pilot.	Killed.
Wm. J. GISE, 2nd Lt., 0-66084,	Navigator.	Evading.
Albert W. LA CHASSE, 2nd Lt., 0-726044,	Bombardier.	P/W.
Thomas W. DYNAN, T/Sgt., 32190053,	Radio Op.	Killed.
Bert F. KAYLOR, S/Sgt., 14077938,	Tail Gunner.	Killed.
Truman C. WILDER, Jr., S/Sgt., 18039746,	Ball Turret.	Killed.
Bruce NICHOLSON, S/Sgt., 6937694,	Waist Gunner.	Killed.

9 OCTOBER 1942 We left THURLEIGH about 0830 hours, 9 October, 1942, to bomb LILLE. Shortly after we ~~crossed the French coast~~ *crossed the French coast* I noticed we had missed our primary target. We made a wide turn and started for our secondary target (an aerodrome). At the end of the turn we were hit by flak and fell behind the formation.

As a Focke-Wulf came at us I shot him all the way in feeling that I had hit him for as he turned away smoke was pouring from his engine. Three more F.W.'s came after us but before they were within firing range flak tore a hole, about one foot in diameter, through our nose. This helped clear a dense smoke from inside the plane.

I went to the floor as fighters came in hitting my turret. I got up, saw the F.W.'s closer but before I could shoot flak hit the cabin again and, I believe, killed the pilot. Then there was a burst of flak in the tail and we went into a steep dive.

The F.W.'s were machine-gunning us as we started down. I tried to get at my parachute but could not get out of my turret until we had gone into a flat spin at about 3,000 feet. I saw the ~~xxx~~ pilot was bleeding badly and the co-pilot was slumped forward. While getting my chute I saw someone go out of the nose of the a/c. I think it was the Bombardier. I buckled the chest-buckle of my chute but did not have time to fasten the leg-straps. I went, head-first, out of the bombardier hatch. I was too low for a delayed jump. I pulled the rip-cord with one hand and when it failed to respond jerked at it with both hands. The chute opened around 500 feet. Just before I made the ground I heard the bombs and plane explode. *Immediately* after this there was another explosion.

PLANE DISABLED
BY FLAK
FLAK PUTS PLANE
OUT OF ACTION

FORCED JUMP

LANDS IN
BELGIUM

I did not see any chutes in the air. I made a good landing and, looking up, I saw two F.W.'s circling around me. One of the planes made a steep dive at me but did not shoot. I unbuckled the parachute. There were several civilians on the road that ran by the field. I thought at the time that I was in FRANCE instead of BELGIUM.

As I stood up a civilian ran across the field. He motioned for me to get down in a ditch and to go along a road towards a house. The man did not go with me but went to where the plane had crashed. The ditch was half-full of water. I crawled to the end of it and stayed hidden in the reeds for about an hour. While waiting I took one of the benzadrine tablets from my Escape Kit.

The man came back and motioned me to go to another ditch and hide. I did this and waited until the man came back with a pair of coveralls.

Still lying down, I changed into the coveralls and hid my flying suit under some weeds. I followed the man across the road to a barn. There were two men and a woman in the barn. They brought in a pan of water so that I could wash. There was a cut on my hand. The coveralls were too small so one of the men took off his clothes ~~which~~ ^{and} I put ^{them} on. When I motioned that I was thirsty they brought wine which helped me.

Then, I walked with two of the men across the fields for about a mile to a store. I could not keep the wooden shoes on my feet and had to walk in my socks. Later I was given a pair of old rubber shoes.

A man at the store asked me for pictures and I gave him two. We got two bicycles here and I cycled for about 8 miles, keeping a distance of 50 yards between us, to ^{the} home of one of the men. His mother gave me food and then he took me, on foot, to an old vacant house. He left me there all afternoon but returned that evening with a man who spoke some English. They gave me a change of clothes. I followed the new man, cycling, south for about 10 miles, ^{where} ~~when~~ I was put in the hands of an organization, who arranged my subsequent journey for me.

ASN 19004589,
T/Sgt. Erwin Derold Wissenback,
367 Bomb Sq., 306 Bomb Gp.

APPENDIX "B"

1. Did not see Aerodromes. Did see 2 large Bohm-Voss 6-engined planes or flying boats in *Mediterranean, just before we reached MARSEILLES.*
2. Saw none.
3. Saw none.
4. Saw many Germans & Italians in NICE, mostly Italian. In MARSEILLES, mostly Germans. Saw no signs on vehicles or transport.
5. No.
6. In N. FRANCE Germans shabby and not as good as in S. FRANCE. Both had good boots. Italians in S. FRANCE very poor. I heard Italians were ready to fight with us.

APPENDIX B

- 1 Did not see Aerodromes.
Did see 2 large Bohm-Voss 6 engine planes & flying
boats in Marseilles just before we reached Marseilles.
- 2 Saw none.
- 3 " " "
- 4 Saw many German & Italian in Nice, ^{mostly Italian} ~~at~~ ^{mostly} Marseilles.
Saw no signs.
- 5 No.
- 6 In N. France German shabby & not as good as in
Southern France. Both had good boats. Italians
in S. France very few. I heard Italians were ready
to fight with us.



1 yes. By the man who took me to the house where
the professor or Vincent lived.
Got food clothing transportation papers & everything
necessary to effect an escape.

		306 ^{sq}	369 ^{Squad}		
✓ Capt Dick Adams	in			Nice	about Feb 1 st
Lt Roper		92 ^{sq}	"	"	"
Lt Frost	in	306 ^{sq}	367 ^{Sq}	Marseille	"
Wing Com Winkie		"	"	"	"

(1)

We THURKHEIGH
Left ~~Thurkeigh~~ about 8³⁰ A.M. ~~set off~~ to bomb
Lille. We crossed channel and when over France approaching
the target I noticed we had fallen back of the
formation and a German F. W. Wolf came in and I shot
him all the way in. I am sure I hit him as there was
a lot of smoke from his engine he turned sideways of
us. Then three more came in but before they were within
range flock hit our nose and flew a hole about a
ft in diameter this helped clear smoke from plane. Then
as fighters came on my turret was hit + I went to
the floor. I got up + saw F. Ws closer + before I had a
chance to shoot again flock hit cabin + I think killed
pilot also flock hit the tail + we went into a
dive. The F. Ws were mocking gunning us as we started
down. While in dive I ^{tried to} put on chute but could not
get out of turret to get chute until at about 3000 ft
we went into a flat spin. When out of turret I saw
pilot bleeding badly + unconscious. The Co-Pilot
was slumped forward. As I reached for chute I
saw someone go out nose I think it was Babilier.
I put on chute (seat) I buckled chest buckle + did
not have time to fasten leg straps. I went out
Boufedian hated. (Head first) I was too low to make
a delayed jump. I pulled up chord with one hand +

(2)

We missed primary target & made a turn & when
for secondary target (An Aerobus) it was while
making this turn that we first hit & fell behind
formation.

chute did not open so I fell with both baskets
& chute opened at about 500 ft. I came down in a
plowed field just before I landed I heard bombs
& plane explosions & just after another explosion.

~~the~~ I did not see any chutes in air. I made a good
landing & looking up saw 2 F.W.s circling around me. One
dove at me but did not shoot. I un buckled shot & saw
several civilians on road. I thought I was in France did
not know I was in Belgium. I stood up saw a civilian
running towards me across field he motioned for me to
get down in a ditch & to go along a road towards a
house I did this. The man did not go with me but
went to see plane crashed. The ditch was $\frac{1}{2}$ full of water
I crawled to end & hid myself in weeds & stayed about $\frac{1}{2}$ hr.
Man came back & motioned for me to go to little ditch
& hid. I did this & waited & man came back with a pair
of coveralls. ~~The man shot my parachute & hid it.~~ I changed
laying down put my flying clothes under some weeds. I
followed the man across a road & he took me to a barn
& there was 2 men & 1 woman there they brought me a pan of
water to wash. I had a cut on hand. One man took off
his clothes & I put them on coveralls were too small.
I motioned I was thirsty & they brought me wine which
helped me a lot. I had taken a Benzocaine tablet in the
ditch. I had lost my purse but still had escape kit.
The 2 men & I walked across fields they tried to
cheer me up. We went to a store after walking about a mile.
I was in stocking feet I could not keep my shoes on

I was given a ³ pair of old rubber shoes.
They asked me for pictures of gas then 2. We got 2
bicycles at stores & I followed ¹ man 50 yds behind for
about 7 or 8 miles to his home. Then his mother gave me
food then he took me on foot to an old vacant house
& left me all afternoon same book that evening with
a man who could speak a little English. They gave me
another change of clothes. I followed the new man on a
bicycle south for about 10 miles. He took me to a house
used by Belg. ~~was~~ A man & his wife lived there. A ^{Belgian} professor
was hiding out there with them. I had supper & Prof asked me
to write a note to ~~Gino~~ a member of my crew that he knew was
safe just as I finished note Gino walked in. Women
here together for 4 days. The money of 5th day Prof's wife of man
who owned house took us to frontier & a friend of theirs
was custom officer we crossed and stopped at house on
other side waited for bus & then 4 of us took it to
Lille. There a man & woman met us & we all went to a
flat where we had food. We walked to a school teachers
home (Self, Gino & man & lady who met us at Lille). She had a boy 15.
We stayed 8 days. Teacher took me to have passport pictures
taken & a lady who came up to take us south took Gino
she was Jean's wife. We left on train 9th morning with Jean
& his wife for Paris. On arrival in Paris ^{about noon} we went to Cafe for food
then to a Pub which was next to a German H. Q. & there
met 5 R.A.F. men & their 2 guides one R.A.F. was Sgt. Bernard.
We then split up & walked around all afternoon. That evening we
met a Mr Lewis & stayed at his home that night. The next
morning we went to Cafe & met our guides Jean & wife & went to
train there we had a compartment for us & R.A.F. & their

at ft

4

two guides. We went to within about 60 miles of Demeratin
line then took bus. Here a German officer stood in front of
me for most of the way. Crossed line about 8 P.M. by crawling
along a fence for about 500 yds & crossed a canal on a log.
We then went to a house where we had to register our guns
names used a identity cards. Next morning we went to
another house & then took a car to station & took train
to Lyon. Waited there about 2 hours & then took train to
Marseille where we arrived about 5 P.M. We went to a nice
flat of ~~the~~ & stayed 2 nights. A man named Albert
took Guise & I to Nice. ~~He~~ 2 of R.A.F. met to Mr & Mrs
We stayed in Nice 3 months. We stayed ^{with} Rene Sainson
he had a Texaco Garage below his flat @ Rue Bonalis.
We were only supposed to stay a week but German gave in
to unoccupied France & Italian into Nice. We were
not allowed out for a month. About 10th Dec a Capt
Dick Adams arrived who had been shot down Nov 8th.
Then on the Jan 22nd they brought a Lt Roper. The
next morning Guise & I left with a bagger who took us
to Marseille. We stayed in a flat here 5 or 6 days. There was
a wing commander nicknamed (Winkie) 2 R.A.F. Sqds, Lt Croast
of 306. We then ^{set for identity cards at station} went to (Guise, self + Pat + Nitelet) Perpignan.
One station before we met F.P. friend. We stayed in hotel
that night & next day & that night found out we could

not leave on account of weather & so not ~~back~~ to Toulouse
 & stayed in a flat which belonged to someone we had
 stayed with in Marseilles 1st time. She stayed some place
 else. We stayed 4 nights & 3 days. We took train next ~~to~~
~~with~~ south of Perpignan & left train & hid in ditch
 met 2 guides & (Guise, Nitelet, 1/2 friend, a Belgian Mayor &
 a young Frenchman) they gave us new soled shoes we
 walked all that night into Spain dodged German
 patrols as they flashed lights. We slept in hills
 that day & next night we walked to flats & waited
 until dark then walked around villoges & next morning
 came to bar & slept there people bought us Oranges
 Bananas to eat. That night we walked 19 hrs until 3 P.M.
 then taken to another bar & slept & fed. Next morning we
 were taken to a hill to wait for ^{British V.P.} Consul. He could only
 take 3, 2 B + 1 American. We rolled dice I won & went with
 him Guise stayed behind. He took Nitelet & me to
 a flat flat right. Next morning U.S. Consul came & took
 me to flat of Ruiz where I stayed 3 days. U.S.
 Consul bought me new clothes. There I found out that
 when British Consul can not back for Guise he was
 caught. British Consul arranged for Guise to stay in hotel.
 Nitelet & I were taken to Madrid in car by R.C.
 stayed 8 days in embassy then by train to Gibraltar 8 days
 + flew back to U.K.

No., Rank, Name :-

Unit :-

Please answer carefully the questions below. Suggestions for improvement of escape equipment and training must come largely from those who make use of them. Your report and comments will help others to evade capture or to escape.

1. AIDS BOX

- (a) Did you use your aids box? *yes*
- (b) If not, had you one on you?
- (c) If not, why had you no aids box?
- (d) If you used it, which of the following items did you use? Put a tick (✓) against each item used and state briefly the circumstances, e.g. "Lying up for 2 nights", etc.
- (i) Horlicks tablets.
- (ii) Chocolate.
- (iii) Milk (tube).
- (iv) Benzadrine tablets (fatigue) ✓ *Used, immediately after landing.*
- (v) Halazone tablets (water purifier).
- (vi) Matches. ✓ *For smoking.*
- (vii) Adhesive tape.
- (viii) Water bottle).
- (ix) Chewing gum.
- (x) Compass. ✓ *Did not have occasion to use it.*
- (e) Did any of the above items prove unsatisfactory? If so, in what respect? *no*
- (f) How did you finally dispose of the box? *Left it with Tris.*
- (g) Can you suggest any way in which the contents of the aid box might be changed to make it of greater use, bearing in mind that the size of it cannot be larger?

2. PURSE

- (a) Did you carry a purse? ^{yes} If so, state COLOUR. ~~GREY~~ GREY.
If NOT, state why not.
- (b) Did you use the purse? NO
- (c) If so, which of the following items in the purse did you use?
Put a tick (✓) against each item used and state briefly the circumstances.
- (i) Maps. Which ones?
 - (ii) Compass.
 - (iii) File (hacksaw).
 - (iv) Foreign Currency. State countries and amounts.
How did you spend the money?
- (d) How did you dispose of :- Purse lost during parachute jump.
- Maps.
 - Compass.
 - File (hacksaw).
 - Surplus currency.

3. AIDS TO ESCAPE - (GADGETS *)

(* Issued separately from aids boxes and purses).

- (a) Did you carry or wear any of the following? If you used any of them, state briefly WHEN and WHERE.
- (i) Round compass.
 - (ii) Stud compass. Did not have.
 - (iii) Swinger compass.
 - (iv) Fly-button compass.
 - (v) Pencil clip compass.
 - (vi) Tunic button compass.
 - (vii) Pipe compass.

(viii) Pouch.

(ix) Special flying boots (and knife).

(b) Were they satisfactory?

(c) Can you suggest any improvements, additions, or substitutions which would improve the above equipment?

4. PASSPORT SIZE PHOTOGRAPHS.

(a) Did you carry passport-size photographs? *yes* If so, how many? *3*

(b) Did you use them? State how. *3 or 2 to first 2 men I met but they did not return them.*

5. LECTURES.

(a) Were you lectured on evasion and escape? *yes*
State WHERE, WHEN and by WHOM.
THURSDAY IN SEPT '42 By I.O.

(b) Did you find the lectures of value? *YES*
Did not tell us what we should observe
Should stress delayed jump.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. 19004589, T/SGT (TEMPORARY),
Erwin Derold WISSENBACK.
2. NONE.
3. 367 BOMB SQ.
4. 306 BOMB GP.
5. 21 JUNE, 1920.
6. 3 OCTOBER, 1941.
7. STUDENT.
8. ROUTE NO. 3, BOX 1130, KLAMATH FALLS, OREGON, U.S.A.
9. 9 OCTOBER, 1942, - LILLE, FRANCE.
THURLEIGH - 0830 HOURS.
BELGIUM - 1130 HOURS. APPROXIMATELY 20 MILES NORTH OF LILLE.
YES. PLANE CRASHED WITH FULL LOAD OF BOMBS AND BLEW UP.
10. John W. OLSON, Capt., O-439684, Pilot. Killed.
Joseph N. GATES, 2nd Lt., O-76211, Co-Pilot. Killed.
William J. GISE, 2nd Lt., O-660484, Navigator. Evading.
Albert W. LA CHASSE, 2nd Lt., O-726044, Bombardier. P/W-GERMANY.
Thomas W. DYNAN, T/Sgt., 32190053, Radio Operator. Killed.
Bert W. KAYLOR, S/Sgt., 14077938, Tail Gunner. Killed.
Truman C. WILDER, Jr., S/Sgt., 18039746, B/T Gunner. Killed.
Bruce NICHOLSON, S/Sgt., 6937694, Waist Gunner. Killed.
21. Yes, by ANDERSON at GIBRALTAR(asked all about people and places,
gave him all information). A little by BABCOCK at MADRID, nothing
on Org. Col. HOLCOMBE a little, asked route and I told him but noth-
ing about people or places. No written report except ANDERSON, who
wrote down what I told him.
- 22.. Told ANDERSON in GIBRALTAR.
23. Yes. In BARCELONA - U.S. Consul; MADRID - U.S. Consul; GIB-
RAITAR - U.S. Consul.
24. Left GIBRALTAR, 20 February, 1943, 0615 hours by air.
25. Arrived PORT REITH, 20 February, 1943, 1345 hours.

1. 19004589 Tech. Sgt. (temporary)
Erwin Derold Wissenback
2. None
3. 367 Bomb Sq ~~306 Bomb Gp.~~
4. 306 Bomb Gp.
5. 6-21-1920 Age 22
6. Oct. 3, 1941 Length of Service: - 2 years
7. Student
8. Post 3 Box 1130 Klamath Falls, Oregon
9. Oct 9, Lille
10. Ghurleigh 8:30 A.M.
Belgium 11:30 approx. 20 miles north of Lille
yes - Plane crashed with full load of bombs and
blew up.
10. John W. Pearson ^{(0-660484) 04684} - Capt - 0-43 pilot killed
- Joseph H. John Gates ⁰⁻⁷²⁶²⁴¹ 2nd Lt. co-pilot killed
- William J. Gise ⁰⁻⁶⁶⁰⁴⁸⁴ 2nd Lt. navigator missing
- Albert W. LaChase ⁰⁻⁷²⁶⁰⁴⁴ 2nd Lt. Bomber prisoner in Germany
- Thomas W. DYNAN ³²¹⁹⁰⁰⁵³ T/Sgt Radio killed
- Bert W. KAYLOR ¹⁴⁰⁷⁷⁹³⁸ S/Sgt tail gunner killed
- TRUMAN C. Hilder, JR. ¹⁸⁰³⁹⁷⁴⁶ S/Sgt. ball turret killed
- Bruce Nicholson ⁶⁹³⁷⁶⁹⁴ S/Sgt waist gunner killed

21 Yes. By Anderson at Gibraltar (asked all about people + places, gave him all info. A little by Baber at Madrid nothing on Brig. Col. Holcomb; a little asked route + I told him, but nothing about people or places. No written report except Anderson who wrote down what I told him.

22 Told Anderson in Gibraltar.

23 Yes In Barcelona U.S. Consul, Madrid U.S. Consul, Gibraltar U.S. Consul.

24 Left Gibraltar Feb 20th 1943 6¹⁵ A.M. By air.

25 Arrived Tort Reith Feb 20th 1943 1⁴⁵ P.M.

I was told that our Bombardier had been sold for 10,000 marks.

Heard flyers had been rocketed + jumped on way down on parachutes.

19 October 1942

SUBJECT: Safeguarding of P/W Information.

7

TO : Personnel concerned.

1. It is the duty of all Americans to safeguard information which might, either directly or indirectly, be useful to the enemy.
2. It is an offense, carrying heavy penalties, to publish or to communicate to any unauthorized person any information which might be useful to the enemy.
3. Information about your escape or your evasion from capture would be useful to the enemy and a danger to your friends. It is therefore SECRET.
4. a. You must therefore not disclose, except to the first Military Attache to whom you report, or to an officer designated by the Commanding General of the Theater of Operations:
 - (1) The names of those who helped you.
 - (2) The method by which you escaped or evaded.
 - (3) The route you followed.
 - (4) Any other facts concerning your experience.
- b. You must be particularly on your guard with persons representing the press.
- c. You must give no account of your experiences in books, newspapers, periodicals or in broadcasts or in lectures.
- d. You must give no information to anyone, irrespective of nationality, in letters or in conversation, except as specifically directed in Par. 4a.
- e. No lectures or reports are to be given to any unit without the permission of the War or Navy Department.

By command of Lieutenant General EISENHOWER:

Ralph Pulsifer
 RALPH PULSIFER,
 Colonel, AGD, Ass't. Adj. Gen.

CERTIFICATE

I have read the above and certify that I will comply with it.

I understand that any information concerning my escape or evasion from capture is SECRET and must not be disclosed to anyone other than the American Military Attache to whom I first report, or an officer designated by the Commanding General of the Theater of Operations. I understand that disclosure to anyone else will make me liable to disciplinary action.

Name (Print) ERWIN D WISSENBACK Signed Erwin D Wissenback
 Rank T/sgt A.S.N. 19004589 Date 2-21-43
 Unit 367th Sq 306 Bomb Gp Witness Richard R Helms
 Capt. a. e.

Sgt Werrinback

(8)

Suggestions,

Should have more gunnery practice & today
fired at a tow target twice.

Priest said he sent by wireless a message saying
I, Guiso were safe. This was 3rd day we were down.