

2215

RAVTS HARRY D. S/ser. 39237555 334<sup>th</sup> SQD. 95<sup>TH</sup> GR. 8<sup>TH</sup> A.F.  
Name Rank & Serial No. Organization & Air Force.

Shot down: MAY-29-1943 NEAR RENNES FRANCE  
Date & Approximate location.

Experiences after being shot down: STAYED IN FIELD FOR TWO DAYS, I THOUGHT THE GERMANS HAD QUIT SEARCHING SO WENT TO A FARMHOUSE, THE FARMER BOUGHT ME A TICKET AND WENT WITH ME TO PARIS WHERE HE BOUGHT ME ANOTHER TICKET TO A SMALL TOWN NEAR THE SWISSE BORDER. I CROSSED THE FRONTIER AT NIGHT WHILE IT RAINED.  
Status: Escapée - ~~Border~~ - ~~Influence~~.

Date of Escape: JUNE-4-1943

Date of Arrival at <sup>ANNECY</sup> ~~MAAF~~: SEPT.-13-1944

Physical Condition: SO COLD, WET, AND TIRED I DIDNT KNOW WHICH END WAS UP. OTHER WISE ARIGHT.

REMARKS: COULD HAVE RECIEVED PERFECT TREATMENT IF THE AMERICAN LEGATION WAS ON THE BALL. BUT CANT COMPLAIN MUCH.

Home Address: 935 3RD ST. SAN BERNARDINO CALIFORNIA.

Departed MAAF Hq.: \_\_\_\_\_

SECRET

APPENDIX "D" TO E AND E REPORT NO.

No., Rank, Name:- *RANTS HARRY P. S/SGT 39237555*

Unit:- *334th Sqd. 95th Sn.*

Suggestions for improvement of escape equipment and training 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 very much.*
- b. If not, why?
- c. If you used it, state briefly the circumstances in which you used each item, for example, "While hiding in woods for two nights".
  - Horlicks tablets. *yes* *for 6 days. Going into Switzerland*
  - Chocolate or Peanut Bar. *yes*
  - Milk (tube). *no*
  - Benzadrine tablets (fatigue). *yes while walking over the mountains after standing in woods in rain for 2 days.*
  - Halazone tablets (water purifier). *no*
  - Matches. *yes*
  - Adhesive tape. *yes*
  - Chewing gum. *yes*
  - Water bottle. *yes*
  - Compass. *yes a great help.*
  - Sewing kit. *no*
- d. Did any of the above items prove unsatisfactory? *no.*
- e. How did you finally dispose of the box? *Left it in woods*
- f. Can you suggest any way in which the contents of the aids 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? *no*  
State color of stripes and letters. *el have forgotten.*  
If NOT, State why not.
- b. Did you use the purse? *yes*

c. If so, which of the following items in the purse did you use?

Maps. Which ones? *Both*

Compass, *yes*

File (hacksaw). *no*

Foreign currency. State countries and amounts.

How did you spend the money? *1,000 FR. FRANCES  
Belgian money also  
100 french francs for train fare.*

d. How did you dispose of:-

Maps. *used them for shoe soles and socks.*

Compass. *Gave it away in Switzerland.*

File (hacksaw). *don't remember*

Surplus currency. *threw it away in Switzerland*

3. Were you issued any extra compasses or further aids to evasion? *no.*

4. PASSPORT SIZE PHOTOGRAPHS

a. Did you carry passport-size photographs?

If so, how many? *no. none issued.*

b. Did you use them? *no*

5. LECTURES

a. Were you lectured on evasion and escape?

State WHERE, WHEN and by WHOM. *in England By my Unit.*

b. Did you find the lectures of value? *yes*

c. Do you have any suggestions to make which, from your experience, you feel will help other evaders and escapers?

*yes.*

*Never give up - remain in hiding.  
Always fit your parachute.  
Check oxygen bottles.*

# RESTRICTED

## WAR DEPARTMENT The Adjutant General's Office Washington

AG 383.6 (31 Jul 43) OB-S-B-M

KLS/el-2B-939 Pentagon

6 August 1943

**SUBJECT:** Amended Instructions Concerning Publicity in Connection with Escaped Prisoners of War, to Include Evaders of Capture in Enemy or Enemy-Occupied Territory and Internees in Neutral Countries.

**TO:** The Commanding Generals,  
Army Ground;  
Army Air Forces;  
The Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area;  
The Commanding Generals,  
Theaters of Operations;  
Defense Commands;  
Departments;  
Base Commands;  
The Commanding Officers,  
Base Commands;  
Director, Bureau of Public Relations.

1. Publication or communication to any unauthorized persons of experiences of escape or evasion from enemy-occupied territory, internment in a neutral country, or release from internment not only furnishes useful information to the enemy but also jeopardizes future escapes, evasions and releases.
2. Personnel will not, unless authorized by the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, War Department General Staff, publish in any form whatever or communicate either directly, or indirectly, to the press, radio or an unauthorized person any account of escape or evasion of capture from enemy or enemy-occupied territory, or internment in a neutral country either before or after repatriation. They will be held strictly responsible for all statements contained in communications to friends which may subsequently be published in the press or otherwise.
3. Evaders, escapees, or internees shall not be interrogated on the circumstances of their experiences in escape, evasion or internment except by the agency designated by the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, War Department General Staff, or the corresponding organization in overseas theaters of operations. In allied or neutral countries, American Military Attaches are authorized to interrogate on escape, evasion and internment matters.
4. Should the services of escaped prisoners of war, evaders, or internees be deemed necessary for lecturing and briefing, such services will be under the direct supervision of the agency designated by the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, War Department General Staff, or the corresponding organization in overseas theaters of operations.
5. Commanding Officers will be responsible for instructing all evaders, escapees, and internees in the provisions of this directive which supercedes letter, AG 383.6 (5 Nov 42) OB-S-B-M, 7 November 1942, subject: Instructions concerning Publicity in Connection with Escaped Prisoners of War and other previous instructions on this subject.

By order of the Secretary of War:

/s/ J. A. ULIO  
J. A. ULIO  
Major General,  
The Adjutant General.

1. 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**.
2. *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, or by A. C. of S., G-2, W. D.
  - (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. 4.  
*e* No lectures or reports are to be given to any unit without the permission of A. C. of S., G-2, W. D., or corresponding organization in the theater.

### GERTIFICATE

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 agency designated by A. C. of S., G-2, War Department, the corresponding organization in overseas theaters of operations, or to the Military Attache in a neutral country to whom I first report. I understand that disclosure to anyone else will make me liable to disciplinary action.

Name (Print) HARRY D. RANTS Signed Harry D. Rants  
Rank S/SGT A. S. N. 39237555 Dated 20 September 1944  
Unit 334<sup>TH</sup> SQD. 95<sup>TH</sup> B. GR. Witness John D. Evans, Capt, MAC

# RESTRICTED

AG P BR HQ SOS

122472

May 31 <sup>1943</sup> bailed out - bet RENNES + coast (bet RENNES + ST MALO)  
Had equipment. Headed two radioman - had been wounded.  
Kid in bushes. stalked alg hedgerows. German soldier on other  
side. Fell flat - soldier came rt. over his head. 3 searching fields  
not discovered - heard dogs. Stayed 2 hrs. Kid agn - all nt.  
+ next day. Farmhouse - approached it. Heard nav. + ball turret  
gunner at another farmhouse. Taken to join other 2. Overst.  
Civies. (Lt. Robert Titus + s/ser Jos. Coss)

<sup>PIERRE</sup>  
1 man bought us tickets to PARIS + went w them.  
PARIS on 1 June. Went to town 12 miles. to MELUN. Left 3  
there w his parents. He to PARIS for Eng. phy man. Going to  
try for passports to SPAIN. Returned - had to leave. Could not  
help except to buy ticket. To PARIS, bought tickets to MORTEAU.  
No papers. At town before 6, an approached lady + worried abt  
her reporting them. Got off, walked alg highway. Lots of Germans  
I stopped + watched. So path into mtns. meeting more  
so off into bushes. Hid until dark, then walked NE alg mtns  
Nav. TITUS up to house for food. No help - offered watches + 1000  
frances. Told to sit next mt. In woods overst in rain - set  
to find German searching house + <sup>found</sup> helper captured. Showed dir of  
border <sup>old</sup> bridge unguarded. Stalking thru bushes, then on rd -  
bridging. He went ahead to try w bridge - no guard. Headed across  
mnts - saw lts in houses - next day - tunnel filled w barbed  
wire. climbed mtn - Swiss cig phy - so into village. (June 4)  
Le Locle - fed, slept all day. Next day - walking to BERNE. all day  
<sup>captured - taken</sup> at LAUPEN. @ 2 nts + day there - BERNE June 7. Questioned  
<sup>to jail</sup> by Swiss - all day. Story abt capture + escape. At Titus  
taken away. June 8. - to lega.

clothes. Sent to GURTEN KULN, just outside Bern  
21-day quarantine. <sup>to</sup> Nevey - hotel, RAF there. Here abt 3 mos.  
Then Lt Bentz + he went to work at BASEL in consul's office.  
3 mos. asked 1 mo. leave - K. LOSTERS - Amer camp. Permission  
for another month. Left to stay here. There abt 3 mos.

curfew (10:30) sqts only. 05-11:30 <sup>etc?</sup> All on per diem

To GHION - 1 April - better food, etc. until 13 Sept.  
everybody in camp except working or covered bills.  
At 7<sup>th</sup> train to GENEVA, train to border Amer trucks to ANVEY <sup>held up</sup> 19 Sept  
for UIC  
Released <sup>was</sup>

Sir Legge - "liable to court martial"

Per diem - at first \$3.50 for sqts.  
raised abt Nov. - \$5.00 not working; \$6.00 if working  
abt APR - cut out all, exc for those working

Last month - no qtrs allowance for wife.  
Per diem cut out  
400 francs - taken in June 1<sup>st</sup> payroll

2215

S/Sgt Harry D RANTS  
39237555  
334 Sdn, 95 B Gp

20 Sept 44

1943

On May 29, I bailed out and landed between RENNES and ST MALO in France. The radioman had been wounded, so after hiding my chute I started ~~looking for~~ him. I walked along the hedgerows and hid in bushes.

*looking for*

Suddenly I heard a German ~~man~~ soldier on the other side of the hedge, so I fell flat. He came through the hedge and stepped over me as he and two other soldiers started combing the field. I stayed in the same position on the edge of the field ~~for~~ two hours, then found another hiding place and remained ~~in~~ there all night and the following day.

I then approached a farmhouse and ~~the~~ farmer took me inside. He told me that Lt Robert TITUS, ~~our~~ navigator, and S/Sgt Joseph COSS, the ball turret gunner, were safe at another farmhouse nearby. I was taken to join them and the three of us stayed together overnight. We were given civilian clothing and ~~arrangements~~ made to get us to ~~Switzerland~~ Spain. ~~plans~~ plans were

One of the man, known as PIERRE, bought four tickets to PARIS. On 1 June he accompanied us there and took us out to his home in MELUN. He left us there and went back into PARIS to find a man who spoke English and who could arrange passports into Spain.

When he returned, he told us we would have to leave immediately and he would be unable to help us other than by buying our railroad tickets. So the four of us returned to PARIS, and he got us tickets to MORTEAU.

We had no papers, ~~with us~~, so approached a lady with questions about getting by the guards. She acted as though she might report us, ~~so~~ so we jumped off the train at the station before MORTEAU. We walked along the highway and passed a number of Germans. One stopped and watched us, so we took a path off into the mountains. We met even more Germans on this path, however, so we hid in the bushes until dark, then walked NE along the mountains.

Lt. TITUS approached a farmhouse and asked for food, but received no help. He offered the people our watches and 1200 francs, and was told to return the following night. We stayed in the woods in the rain the following day and went back to the farmhouse. The place was being searched by German ~~soldiers~~ *soldiers* and we saw them take our helpers away.

A farmer pointed out the direction of the border for us, and told us that the railroad bridge was unguarded. We walked to the bridge, then I went across alone in case there were guards at the other end. It was unguarded, however, so we headed across the mountains. We came to a tunnel filled with barbed wire so climbed across the mountain. On the top, we found an empty package of Swiss cigarettes, so went down into the village.

We found ourselves at LE LOCLE on 4 June. We slept all day, then started walking toward BERNE. That night we were caught and taken to jail in LAUPEN. After two ~~days~~ nights there, we were taken to BERNE. On 7 June, we were questioned all day by the Swiss. We had all made up a story about being captured and subsequently escaping. The following day we were taken to the legation, and

Lt. Titus was separated from us here.

(OVER)

~~It was taken away~~ and Sgt COGS and I <sup>went out to</sup> ~~buy~~ clothes. We were sent to GURTEN KULN for 21 days quarantine, then to the hotel at VEVEY where the RAF escapers were quartered.

After about three months here, I was sent to work in the consul's office at BASEL. After three months ~~at the job~~, I asked for a month's leave and was allowed to go to the American camp at KLOSTERS. At the end of the month, I asked permission to remain another month, and I was told that I could remain there indefinitely.

On 1 April <sup>1944</sup> we were transferred to GLION and I remained there until 13 Sept when they informed us that everyone who was not working and did not owe any bills would be transported to France. About 70 of us were put on a train to GENEVA. From there we took a tram to the border where American trucks were waiting for us. We were driven to ANNECY and remained there until 19 Sept waiting for the weather to clear. On 19 Sept we were flown back to the UK.

HIGLENN

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TOP SECRET

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

APPENDIX C, TECH. SHEET

1. Did you jump or crash land? **JUMPED**
2. What was the town or village nearest to which you jumped or crash landed? **I DONT KNOW**
3. How long was it before you got help? **2 DAYS**
4. List the people who helped you and the location (city, town, or village) in which you were with them, including addresses where possible. After the name or description of each person with whom you stayed give the approximate dates between which you were with him.

*WAS with a man called Pierre. He took me to Paris. I met him at 9:00 PM THE 30<sup>TH</sup> MAY and left him at 6:00 PM THE 31<sup>ST</sup> of MAY I do not remember other names nor towns.*

5. List other American and British evaders whom you saw during your evasion and state where you saw them.

*I MET LT. ROBERT TITUS and S/SET JOE COSS. They were in the same plane as I.*

SECRET

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

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SERVICE PERSONNEL  
EVADING OR ESCAPING FROM ENEMY OCCUPIED COUNTRIES

TARGET: *RENNES FRANCE*

*HARRY D. RANTS Sgt 39237555*  
(Name) (Rank) (ASN)

Date mission in action: *MAY-29-1943*

*5* (No. of missions)

Date arrived in UK: *SEPT.-19-1944*

*334<sup>TH</sup>* *95<sup>TH</sup>*  
(Squadron) (Group)

MEMBERS OF CREW: (Please list names next to positions)

Indicate what happened to each man and how you know.

PILOT *CODY E WATSON*  
CO-PILOT *RENNY KASHER*  
NAVIGATOR *ROBERT TITUS*  
BOMBARDIER *ORME*  
RADIO OPERATOR *FRANCIS P MORAN*  
TOP TURRET GUNNER *PAUL DEHAVEN*  
BALL TURRET GUNNER *JOSEPH COSS*  
WAIST GUNNER *JOHN J BROWN*  
WAIST GUNNER *HARRY D. RANTS*  
TAIL GUNNER *HEMINGER*

*The pilot escaped thru Spain  
Co. pilot, navigator, Ball gunner  
and I escaped to Switzerland.  
The rest are German prisoners  
of war, according to a red  
cross report. Navigator was  
re-patriated from Switzerland*

Decorations:

Date of Birth: *NOV-17-1910*

Private Address: *935 3RD ST GANBERNARDINO CALIFORNIA*

Length of Service: *29 MONTHS*

Job as Civilian: *BAR MAN*

From what field did you take off? Take off time. *ACKENBERRY AT 11:30*

Were all secret papers and equipment destroyed? *I dont know.*

Were you wounded? Give details. *YES WHEN THE PARACHUTE OPEN  
ED A PARACHUTE STRAP HIT ME IN THE MOUTH KNOCKING  
OUT TEETH AND CUTTING MOUTH. ALSO SPRAINED LEG AND BACK*

Did you pay your guides? If so, how much?  
*NO*

Do you speak FRENCH? SPANISH? GERMAN? ITALIAN? OTHER LANGUAGE?

*A LITTLE*  
Did you have identity papers? *YES*

Have you been questioned before on your escape or evasion? If so, where and by whom?

*yes chn Switzerland*

Have you given any one a written report on your experiences. Where and When?

*yes in Switzerland and at annecy France, to General Legge and Col. Hull.*

Did you report on your operations? If so, where and to whom?

*yes at Switzerland, to General Legge*

Did you sign a security certificate warning you against talking about your escape or evasion? If so, Where and When?

*yes in Switzerland to General Legge. 13 Brook 20/9/44*

Date of arrival in Spain:

Date of arrival at Gibraltar:

Place and date of departure for UK. By ~~sea~~ or air. *ANNECY, FRANCE 19/9/44*

List names of American or British personnel believed to have been arrested by Germans.

List names of American or British personnel believed to be evading.

DFG  
DFG  
DFG  
MEL  
MEL  
DFG  
DFG  
DFG  
MEL  
MEL  
BLG  
DFG  
DFG

RECEIVED  
MEL  
11/11/44  
MEL  
11/11/44

SECRET

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

REPORT FOR THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE

HARRY D. RANTS 31967 39237535  
(Name) (Rank) (ASN)

SEPT. - 19 - 1944  
(Date)

334th SQD. 95th Gr.  
(Unit)

MEMBERS OF CREW

PRESENT OFFICIAL STATUS

PILOT  
CO-PILOT  
NAVIGATOR  
BOMBARDIER  
RADIO OPERATOR  
TOP TURRET GUNNER  
BALL TURRET GUNNER  
WAIST GUNNER  
WAIST GUNNER  
TAIL GUNNER

Date, time and approximate location of plane crash or landing.

*Between Rennes France and Coast at 3:30 P.M.*

Nature and extent of damage to plane when source bailed out. Was it on fire, etc?

*Right wing tip was badly torn, one engine out, plane was shaking badly*  
At approximately what altitude did source bail out? *20,000 ft.*

Were any of the crew injured or killed before the plane crashed?

*Francis P. Moran Radio man was wounded in left arm and leg.*

What members of the crew bailed out? Did their parachutes open?

*all bailed out and all chutes opened.*

Did the plane explode on striking the ground? *Didn't see*

Did source see any other members of the crew dead or alive after reaching the ground?

*yes. Navigator, and Ball gunner.*

Did he receive any information from others as to whether any other members of the crew were dead or alive? If so, give details furnished by his informant and whether the other crew members were identified by name or otherwise.

*yes. The French took the Radio man's name and said the Germans took him prisoner.*

Did source examine the wreckage of the plane? If so, what was its condition?

*no.*

If the plane crashed in water how far was the plane from land and by what means was source rescued and what life rafts, wreckage, etc., remained on the surface that would have assisted other personnel to keep afloat.

What is source's opinion as to the fate of the other crew members and his reason for his opinion?

*5 are prisoners of war. (By the red cross)  
2 are in america. (By American Legation in Bern.)  
2 are in England (I think)*

SECRET - AMERICAN  
MOST SECRET - BRITISH

APPENDIX "B" TO E AND E REPORT NO.

List all military information which you observed or were told while evading. Give fullest possible details. (Airfields, troop encampments, coastal and interior defenses, AA batteries, radar installations, troop movements, results of allied bombing, location of enemy factories and ammunition dumps, enemy and civilian morale, etc., etc.,.....)