

97TH. BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (1) ARMY AIR FORCES
A. P. O.

S T A T E M E N T

At approximately 2:30 P.M. on March 27, 1944 at Isoletta, Italy, which lies a few miles northeast of Cassino we encountered intense flak. The aircraft received a burst in the left horizontal stabilizer and engine. We slipped to our left engine picked up again and we started to climb back into formation when we were hit in the right engine and wing. I believe that the wing and engine were blown off as later when we viewed the wreckage they were gone. We immediately started to spin to the right. Sgt. Kuckenbecker's flak suit was badly torn in the back, but he was not hit. We bailed out and were immediately picked up by the Germans from the "Flak Batteries".

After being captured we drove a few miles down the road where we met our pilot 2nd. Lieut. William E. Hardy, O-798293. The Germans took our name, rank and serial number, and also made a list of our personal effects. They took our wallets and other papers, but let us keep our watches, rings, etc. Later, in the Prison Camp, my wallet was returned minus a few dollars and my "Short Snorter Bills". I believe that this was taken for a souvenir.

After driving a few miles we were joined by S/Sgt. Sylvester E. Frankhouser, 6749186, who informed us that in his aircraft Lieut. Marshall K. Cokkrill, O-730367, and S/Sgt. Robert M. Bartlett, 16036411, were both killed and that S/Sgt. Ritchie A. Love, 13041853, had broken both his ankles and left thigh and was burned about the face and hands.

We drove still further down the road and then I was taken to a small hospital where they treated me for slight facial burns around my eyes and a few minor flak wounds in my hands and left leg. This was the last I saw of Lieut. Hardy, S/Sgt. Frankhouser, or Sgt. Bruce L. Kuckenbecker, 39552001.

LATTERIA
I was then taken to ^LAquila, Italy, where the Germans have a hospital within a few hundred yards from a transient prison camp. They treated me for about a week and kept me at Aquila for about three weeks and then transferred me to Latteria, Italy, which is a few miles northwest of Arettzo, Italy. I was there for about a month and on May 10th, 1944, I succeeded in escaping by myself in a box of garbage which is taken from the camp every day or so about 10:30 AM. I travelled south a few miles where I stayed in the hills with the Italians until July 11th, 1944, when a Belgian and myself finally succeeded in passing through the German lines at night.

The Belgian and myself reported to the English Headquarters Command where we were questioned and showed them where some Germans had their heavy guns and mortars located, also where the Germans were living in the houses in our area. We were then sent back from the front to Rome where I was informed that I was to report to Naples. I succeeded in reaching the 97th

Bombardment Squadron area at 9:00 PM on the night of July 16, 1944.

John H. Murphy

JOHN H. MURPHY, 18133844
Sgt. 97th Bomb Sq. (1),
47th Bomb Cp. (1) AAF.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 18th day of July, 1944.

Harold F. Olsen

Harold F. Olsen,
Captain, Air Corps,
Adjutant.