

SECRET

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

REPORT FOR THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE
and QUESTIONNAIRE FOR I. S. 9 (WLA) PERSONNEL

Sept. 15, 1944.
(Date)

Hilditch Eric J. Sgt. 32488990
(Name) (Rank) (ASN)

Berlin 3
(Target) (Number of missions)

Date Missing in Action: 3-6-44

Returned to UK: _____

754th Sqdn. 458th. Cp.
(Unit)

MEMBERS OF CREW: (List names by positions and indicate what happened to each one)

PILOT 2nd Lt. Thayer Hopkins. Last heard of in Holland
CO-PILOT 1st Lt. Thomas Herndon captured - Broken ankle
NAVIGATOR 2nd Lt. Samuel Roberts Last heard of in Holland
BOMBARDIER Flo 1st Lt. Cleveland " " " " Belgium
RADIO OPERATOR Sgt. James Peterson captured
TOP TURRET GUNNER Sgt. N. Warren "
MID TURRET GUNNER Sgt. James Hobson "
W/ST GUNNER Sgt. Carle Knight " broken hip + lacerated leg
W/ST GUNNER Sgt. Harold Lambousy "
TAIL GUNNER Sgt. Eric Hilditch evaded

Date, time and approximate location of plane crash or landing. 3-6-44 Nickerack Holland

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

No. 4 Feathered, No. 3 windmilling, + all fuel gone. no fire

At approximately what altitude did source bail out? 10,000 Ft.

Were any of the crew injured or killed before the plane crashed? No

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

Did the plane explode on striking the ground? Yes

Did source see any other members of the crew dead or alive after reaching the ground?
I gave 1st. aid to Sgt. Carle Knight

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.

underground gave me information as to whereabouts of the rest of the crew. All were accounted for (over)

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

Dont know

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?

checked with members who saw enemy capturing members

Were you wounded? No

Were you in German hands? No

Did you kill any Germans in escaping? No

Have you previously given the names of your helpers? Yes

List any names previously omitted, showing what help was given.

What security briefing were you given? at least 5 hrs. on escape

What souvenirs do you still possess? Small trinkets

Home address. 695 Parkway Ave. Apt. B-1 Trenton, New Jersey

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

Edward Taylor 1st Lt. American (Gestapo)

~~Edward Taylor 1st Lt. American (Gestapo)~~

August Fleishbein 2nd Lt. " "

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

Robt. Cleveland U.S.

Leo Williams "

Thayer Hopkins "

Saml Roberts "

James Linth English

RESTRICTED

1. Because disclosures of information regarding evasion from capture, escape, details of imprisonment, release from internment, and repatriation have been made, the lives and services of fellow soldiers and those who help them have been lost or endangered. All information which you possess on these subjects, including the experiences of others as well as your own, briefings and equipment for evasion and escape, and preparations and other activities in connection therewith, constitutes MILITARY INFORMATION which is classified SECRET by the War Department.

2. You will therefore disclose no information whatever, beyond the fact of your return to duty from "missing in action" or "prisoner of war" or "internment", to anyone except the following military officials:

- a. The first Military Attache to whom you report;
- b. An officer designated by the Commanding General of an overseas Theatre of Operations;
- c. The Prisoner of War Branch, MIS, Washington, D.C., the interrogating agency designated by the A/C of S, G-2, War Department General Staff;
- d. Certain other officers holding written authority from the A/C of S, G-2, WDGS, to interrogate you.

3. You will particularly guard against disclosure of SECRET information to relatives, friends, representatives of the press and radio, and military officials, except as noted in a, b, c and d above.

4. In order to protect yourself against disciplinary action, any question involving publicity must be referred BY YOU PERSONALLY to the A/C of S, G-2, WDGS, Washington, D.C.

CERTIFICATE

I certify that I have read and fully understand all of the foregoing and the Directive of the Secretary of War, 6 Aug 43 (on the reverse side), and will at ALL TIMES hereafter comply fully therewith.

I understand that all information concerning escape, evasion from capture, activities and equipment in connection therewith, and details of imprisonment or release from internment, is SECRET and must not be disclosed to anyone except the military officials specifically designated. I further understand that disclosure to any other person will make me liable to disciplinary action for failure to safeguard MILITARY INFORMATION.

I realize that publicity concerning my experiences, by word of mouth or otherwise, will endanger the lives of many persons and therefore it is my duty to take all possible precautions to prevent it.

I further certify that I have received a copy of the foregoing.

Name (Print) Mitchell, Eric J. Signed Eric J. Mitchell

Rank Sgt. A.S.N. 32488950 Dated 15-44 Place

Unit 75A Sqn. 458. Group Witness

(Applies to all BRITISH, CANADIAN, U.S. & ALLIED PERSONNEL)

EVASION CAPTURED FROM (Name of Country, HOLLAND.....)

For all Personnel.

- 1. No. 32488990..... Rank **Sgt.**..... Name **HILDITCH, ERIC, J.**
(Unit Acting, Temp. or W/S)
- 2. Decorations: (U.S.A.A.F. No. of Missions)..... **3 Missions**.....
- 3. Were you wounded? Give details. **no baled out**.....
- 4. Ship (Navy), Unit (Army), Sqn. (Air Force) **784th Sqdn.**.....
- 5. Div. (Army) or Gp. (Air Force) **458th Gp. 8th AF**..... (Platoon, etc.) **Tail Gunner**
- 7. Date of Birth **Oct. 13, 1913**..... Length of Service **1 yr. 7 mo.**.....
- 9. Peace time occupation **Aircraft Inspector**..... Private address **695 Parkway Ave.**
Apt. B-1, Trenton, New Jersey
- 11. Did you carry any form of identification, or photographs? **DOG tags**.....
- 12. Do you speak French, or any other foreign language? **no**.....

FOR R.A.A.F. ONLY.

- 13. No. and location of C.I.U.
- 14. No. and location of Conversion Unit.....

FOR ALL AIR FORCE PERSONNEL, AIRBORNE AIR CREW OR PARACHUTE TROOPS WHO BALE OUT.

- 15. Post in Crew..... **tail gunner**.....
- 16. Other members of crew, and information about what has happened to them.
N.B. - Airborne and Parachute Groups: List below name and units of other occupants of plane, including R.A.F. and U.S.A.A.F. *See 1596*
- PILOT **1st Lt. THAYER HORKINS** - Last heard of **May in UG**
- CO-PILOT **1st Lt. THOMAS HERNON** - POW
- NAVIGATOR..... **2nd Lt. SAMUEL ROBERTS** - May with UG
- POW BARDLER..... **E/O ROBERT CLEVELAND** - July sent to N. Fr by UG
- RADIO OPERATOR..... **Sgt. WILLIAM PETERSON** - Roberts & Cleveland saw POW
- TOP TURRET GUNNER **Sgt. WARREN**..... " " " "
- BALL TURRET GUNNER **Sgt. JAMES HOBSON**..... " " " "
- WAVE GUNNER (R.)..... **S/Sgt. EARLE KNIGHT** - injured, I saw captured
- WAVE GUNNER (L.)..... **Sgt. HAROLD LAMBOUSY** - R & C saw captured
- TAIL GUNNER..... **narrator**
- 17. Type of aircraft, place, date, time of departure **B-24, Hansham Saint Faith, Norwich, 3-6-44 - 0845**.....
- 18. Where and when did you come down? **Amersfoort, Holland, March 6, 44 1515**
- 19. How did you dispose of your parachute, harness and mae west? **Buried them under some bushes.**
- 20. Were all secret papers and equipment destroyed? **After crew baled out, plane crashed in Nikerack, Holland and burned.**

Interview by I.S.9. (WEA)

Date **13 Sept. 1944**

I grade this evasion No.5

Attached:

- Appendix "B"
- Appendix "C"
- Appendix "D"

Robert Bacon

ROBERT BACON
2nd Lt., AC

Major

Disposal: Returned to unit....

DISTRIBUTION:

- Hq. I.S.9 (WEA).....2
- 12th Army Group.....2 (less C)
- 9th AF.....1

Target was Berlin partial cloud cover. Flak heavy bombed center of city ~~altitude~~ altitude 20,000ft. hit by Flak about 1 hr from target lost No. 4 engine than no. 3 due to hit in cross feed lines. Lost all fuel near north sea. Turned back to Dutch coast and bailed out. Fighters down low did not attack us. 3 P-47s escorted us to coast of Holland after distress signals were fired. Lt. Hernon broke ankle on landing parachute and was captured. Sgt. Knight broke hip and cut lower lip nearly off in landing. I gave him first aid then was chased by Germans and got away. Peterson, Hobson, Lambousy and Warren were taken prisoners. I hid out for 6 hours in swamp until darkness. then contacted 4 houses until I found help. They finally contacted organization. Kept in Amersfoort for 4 weeks then was moved to Deurne in Holland by train, an hours drive to at least 25 other places in Holland and then finally to Belgium. While crossing border we were chased and shot at by Germans. Finally made Liege in Belgium. Hopkins, Roberts and Cleveland left with other organization in May 44 last saw them in Deurne.

1 Edward E Taylor | 96 Bomb Sq Tinsak N)
 1 August Fleischbein | Smi Mi. go 13-19

Ct in Belgium - latter with out dog tags -
 going for train - station bombed - UG took to
 prison

100 lbs
 pulled thru
 with
 RAF - m
 Typhoons
 MIA -
 Feb
 met him
 in Liege
 he told
 by UG
 made into
 message
 sent you

Gustysman question Taylor - pass for - Fleischbein -
 say flin - UG ran out - Gustysman grab -
 Fleischbein - took down east gate and UG message -
 to get away.
 2 Apr 5 taken -

Enter target
from all
out.

APPENDIX "C" TO E. & E. REPORT No I.S.9 (WEA) / 6/214 / 1695

If further circulation of this information is made, it is important that its source should not be divulged.

No. 32488990 Rank Sgt Name HILDITCH, ERIC J.

Date of Interview 13 Sept. 1944

Mr. Ottens in Amersfoort

Mrs. Jeanne Clerinx in Liege

Others hid just out in woods and vacant houses did not wish to divulge names.

Had been told in lectures to travel by night. It is better to travel by day in occupied countries due to controls.

Carried an aid box and ~~was~~ used it.

Carried an red money purse and used the ~~red~~ money for expenses.

Briefed on escape and evasion in Norwich, England at base.

2114
CONFIDENTIAL

IDENTIFICATION:

No. 32488990 Rank Sgt

Name (BLOCK LETTERS) Eric J. Hilditch

USC 458 B Gp

Was born ~~in~~ and interrogated by an Intelligence Officer of I.S. 9 (WEA)

on 13 Sept 1944 and has signed a Security Certificate.

He ~~is~~ should not be re-interrogated.

Robert Bacon
2/Lt, AC.

REMARKS:

THIS INFORMATION IS TO BE KEPT ON A NEED-TO-KNOW BASIS AND IS TO BE RELEASED TO (1) PERSONNEL OFFICERS OF U.S. ARMY, AIR FORCE, NAVY, MARINE CORPS, AND COAST GUARD, AND (2) PERSONNEL OFFICERS OF U.S. AIR FORCE, AIR FORCE, NAVY, MARINE CORPS, AND COAST GUARD, AND (3) PERSONNEL OFFICERS OF U.S. AIR FORCE, AIR FORCE, NAVY, MARINE CORPS, AND COAST GUARD, AND (4) PERSONNEL OFFICERS OF U.S. AIR FORCE, AIR FORCE, NAVY, MARINE CORPS, AND COAST GUARD.