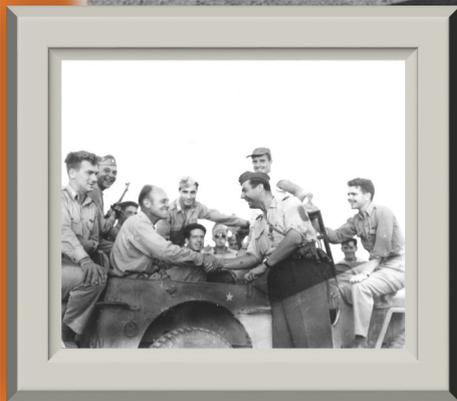


Operation Reunion

The rescue of Allied airmen from Roumania
23 August - 3 September 1944



HEADQUARTERS MEDITERRANEAN
AIR FORCE REPORT

454th

www.454thbombgroup.it

HEADQUARTERS
MEDITERRANEAN ALLIED AIR FORCES

SUBJECT: Report on OPERATION REUNION.

TO : Deputy CG, AAF/MTO.

1. In compliance with the Air C-in-C's directive and your oral instructions, the undersigned party of officers spent two days (3-4 September) at Hq. Fifteenth Air Force investigating the rescue of 1158 American and British airmen from Roumania during the period 27 August through 3 September.

2. A report on the entire subject is attached hereto, consisting of a narrative account and the following appendices.

- a. Field orders, Operations GUNN and REUNION.
- b. Excerpts - MASAF INTOPS Summaries.
- c. Report by Col. George Kraiger.
- d. Interrogation of the Rescued Airmen - general summary by A-2 Section, Fifteenth Air Force.
- e. Interrogation of Lt. Col. James A. Gunn.
- f. Interrogation of Lt. Col. William G. Snaith.
- g. Conditions, P/W Hospital in Bucharest - A-2 Section, Fifteenth Air Force.
- h. Medical Report on Evacuees - Lt. Col. Nelson.
- i. Photo and Chart - Popesti Airfield.
- j. Miscellaneous data on personalities, anecdotes, etc.
- k. P.R.O. data and releases.
- l. Selected photographs.

JAMES PARTON, Lt. Col., A.C.

G. B. ROBBINS, Lt. Col., A.C.

R. B. NELSON, Lt. Col., M.C.

HOWARD ARK, Major, A.C.

HEADQUARTERS
MEDITERRANEAN ALLIED AIR FORCES

Report On

OPERATION REUNION

The Rescue of Allied Airmen from Roumania
27 August - 3 September 1944

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Between 1 August 1943, date of the first American bombardment of Floesti, and 23 August 1944 when Roumania capitulated, approximately 2,500 American and British airmen were reported missing in action over Roumania. The great majority of these men - 2290 of them - were lost during the Fifteenth Air Force's great offensive against Floesti during the period of April 5th to August 20th 1944.

2. By 23 August, when Roumania gave up, 867 men had made their way back to Italy in driblets of a few at a time, chiefly through Jugoslavia. It was known, however, that upwards of 1,500 others remained in enemy territory, either in hiding or in prison camps. In the ten days following Roumania's surrender nearly three-quarters of these stranded airmen were whisked back to Italy by the Fifteenth Air Force in an aerial rescue operation without precedent for size, speed or success. Not only was this feat a dramatic and heart-warming story of tremendous interest to the U. S. public, but it bid fair to become a model for further rescue operations as other Nazi areas succumb to the Allied offensive.

II. OPERATIONS

1. Among the most recent arrivals at the Roumanian prison camps was Lt. Col. James A. Gunn III, O-385405, C.O. 454th Group (H). Shot down near Pliesti on August 17th (see TAB E

for his detailed interrogation), he was captured at once and taken to a school-house in downtown Bucharest used as a prison for Allied officers. Finding himself the senior officer present, Col. Gunn took command.

2. When Roumania capitulated a few days later Col. Gunn at once approached the Roumanian authorities for permission to fly to Italy for help in evacuating the Allied prisoners. After being referred to the Air Minister and the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, it was agreed to let Col. Gunn fly out on the morning of the 26th in an antique Savoia Marchetti. After half an hour it had to return with engine trouble. Col. Gunn then encountered a certain Captain Cantacuzino of the Roumanian Air Force who offered to fly him out in the radio compartment of an Me-109G. The Air Minister concurred and the plane, with U.S. flags painted on both sides and Col. Gunn screwed into the fuselage, took off at 1720 hours, 27 August.

3. Capt. Cantacuzino, the pilot, was a handsome, dashing young man (see pictures, TAB L) who claimed a distinguished career in Roumanian aviation. Educated in Roumania and little traveled outside his native land, he served as chief pilot of the Roumanian State Air Lines from 1930 - 1940, holding a Reserve Commission in the Air Force at the same time and occasionally demonstrating aerial acrobatics at air shows. Called to duty when Roumania entered the war, he became C.O. of the 9th Pursuit Group which was outfitted in 1944 with Me-109G's and was stationed in August 1944 at Roman Airfield, near Jassy. By then Capt. Cantacuzino had been in 200 air combats and had 64 "victories" by the Roumanian scoring system (one "victory" for each single-engined fighter or solitary twin-engined aircraft claimed; two for each twin-engined bomber destroyed while in formation; and four for each four-engined Allied bomber). He specifically mentioned shooting down U.S. P-38's,

B-24's and B-17's on many occasions. When Roumania gave up, he kept a wary eye on the Germans occupying Roman A/D with him and the next night flew his whole group to Popesti A/D near Bucharest. In the next few days when the Germans savagely unloaded their remaining bomb stocks on the hapless Roumanian capital, Cantacuzino's Group claimed 12 Nazi planes, of which the Captain bagged four himself. Thus, in the four days between 23 and 27 August he had swung full circle from shooting down Allied bombers to destroying German. This troubled him not a whit. He was, he said blandly, a soldier who fought whomever he was told to fight.

4. At 1920 hours on the 27th the tower at San Giovanni, Italy, Col. Gunn's home field, was mildly astonished to see an Me 109 slip in to land. It taxied up and was at once surrounded by a curious throng. Cantacuzino, obviously enjoying himself, stood up in the cockpit, announced that he had a surprise for them and called for a screw-driver. The plate in the fuselage was then opened and the C.O. of the 454th Group hauled forth before his cheering men.

5. Gunn flew at once to Bari and sat down with Brigadier General Charles Born, Director of Operations at the Fifteenth, to evolve a rescue plan. Operation GUNN (TAB A) was laid out on the 28th and took place on the 29th. Its first phase consisted of 3 P-51's, one piloted by Cantacuzino, flying back to Popesti A/D to make sure it was still safe for the evacuation. Cantacuzino was to land there and signal his two companions by Very Pistol. They had secret orders to shoot him down if he behaved suspiciously on the way in. All went well, however. Cantacuzino landed and promptly shot off the double yellow star which meant that the field was still in Roumanian hands. The two remaining P-51's at once climbed to altitude and flashed a signal to a weather plane half-way home over Jugoslavia. It

relayed the message on to Bari and the second phase of Operation GUNN began.

6. This consisted of 2 B-17's with an escort of 32 P-51's. They flew an O.S.S. party in with two radio sets. Also aboard was Col. George Kraiger of Hq. MAAF, who had been for several months in charge of a Balkan rescue mission operating in the Chetnik area. They landed at 1530 and were met by Mr. Rica Georgescu, Secretary of State and Minister of National Economy. The airplanes took off at once and the party proceeded to Bucharest where it obtained as headquarters a house belonging to one Demeter Bragadiru at 5 Aleea Modrogan. The O.S.S. party at once set up their radios, but for some reason, as yet unexplained, could not get through to Bari. At 1715 on the 30th, therefore, Cantacuzino was again sent to Italy to notify the Fifteenth Air Force that everything was ready for the 31st. Cantacuzino arrived in Italy without trouble and Operation REUNION began on the morning of the 31st. It fell into three sections, REUNION I on the 31st, II on the 1st of September and III on the 3rd (TAB A).

7. In Bucharest meanwhile Col. Kraiger had organized the move of the prisoners to Popesti. He found about 800 in a camp in the outskirts, where they had moved after going through the very heavy German bombardment in the center of the city. Another 100 were in Pitrositza and other were at large through-out the area, the prison bars having been let down almost completely after the 23rd. Transport was a problem, but the Roumanians provided 27 buses which arrived at the P/W camp at 0500. By 0600 all 800 had been carried the 14 miles to Popesti. Kraiger sent a truck off in search of bread and cheese and lined the men up along the perimeter of the field in batches of 20 at 150 ft. intervals, each group with its designated C.O. Thus, when the B-17's began to arrive on

schedule at 1000, they could taxi up beside each group of men and get off again with a minimum of delay.

8. For Operation REUNION 56 B-17's of the 2nd and 97th Groups were outfitted with special racks for carrying personnel in their bomb-bays. Two were equipped for litter cases. They flew in three waves of 12 at an hour's interval on the 31st, heavily escorted all the way. Aside from one which had a flat tire, each wave was off again in fifteen minutes with 20 evacuees per ship. In the first wave came two doctors, who went at once to the disgraceful hospital (see below and TAB G) where 39 patients were hastily treated and brought to the field in time for the 2 litter-bearing B-17's departure at 1425. That day a total of 739 P/W were evacuated, including 10 litter cases and 29 sitting patients.

9. REUNION II on September first consisted of one flight of 16 B-17's. One suffered a burst wing tank on landing, but its place was taken by the ship which had a flat tire on the preceding day. Evacuated that day were 393 P/W's, including hospital attendants and 12 walking patients.

10. During September 2nd, while Col. Kraiger was making a formal farewell call upon Georgescu, Prime Minister Sanatescu and President Maniu, a few more stragglers came in. Nineteen Americans were still in their former prison when the incoming Russians began to fill it with captured Germans. Other Americans, luxuriously accommodated by various rich Roumanians who apparently believed that an American in the house would be a valuable foil against Russian requisition, had virtually to be ordered to Popesti for the final lift. REUNION III on 3rd September consisted of 3 B-17's and a C-47, the latter bringing a repair crew and a wing panel (strapped underneath the fuselage) for the B-17 with the exploded tank. With the final 29 P/W's and Col. Kraiger aboard, they took off at 1530 for Italy.

Left behind was but one former P/W - TSgt. Peter Tierney - too ill to be moved. Two doctors stayed with him and the O.S.S. party, whose radios still were not functioning, remained at the Hq.

11. All told, in Operations GUNN and REUNION 59 B-17, 94 P-38, 281 P-51 and 1 C-47 sorties were flown. One P-38 was lost and 2 Ju--52's were claimed destroyed and an Me-109 damaged. Evacuated were a total of 1,162 men, of which 1,127 were Americans, 31 British, 2 Dutch naval officers, 1 a French Sergeant and 1 a Roumanian stowaway with a dubious lien on an American citizenship.* The 1,127 U.S. personnel were broken down as follows:

From Fifteenth Air Force - 445 Officers
608 Enlisted Men
Or a total of - 1053

From Eighth & Ninth Air Forces -
30 Officers
44 Enlisted Men
Or a total of - 74

*

British personnel consisted of 29 RAF and 2 Army. The Frenchman was but one of some 250 French refugees eager to be removed. The two Dutch - Admiral Dorman and Lt. Baron von Lynden - had been extremely helpful to the U. S. prisoners (see TAB J). The stowaway was one R. Flasher, 29 years of age, who claimed to have been born in the United States at Battle Creek, Michigan, of Roumanian parents. In 1927, upon death of Flasher's grandparents in Roumania, he and his parents returned to that country in order to claim property left to them by the grandparents, claiming Roumanian citizenship at this time. Flasher stated that in 1941, he established his claim to American citizenship and obtained a passport from the Roumanians for passage to America but could not obtain the necessary visa from the Germans. He stated that during the past three years he had been interned twice by the Germans as an American citizen. Prior to the evacuation of the Group from Roumania he was befriended by two American pilots who gave him GI coveralls and an identification card belonging to one of the pilots, in an attempt to get him aboard one of the transports back to Italy. Colonel Kraiger refused him transportation at the airport. He reflected that stowing away on a later flight would be quite easy and did so. Immediately upon landing at Bari Airport he was taken into custody by the CIC and subsequently turned over to CSDIC for disposition.

III. PROCESSING

1. As soon as the planes landed, the personnel was met at the airfield and given an orientation talk by General Born or General Twining. "Thank God you're back", said General Twining. "We've sweated you out a long time." At this orientation meeting they were told that they would soon be sent home. Ambulances were on hand to take litter patients to the hospital. All other personnel were sent to the hospital in trucks for a checkup examination which consisted mostly of examining their feet, heart, and lungs. Necessary cases were hospitalized. They then filled out record forms and were served **sandwiches** and hot coffee at the hospital. At this time they were told that they had the privilege of a full medical examination if they so desired. Upon leaving the hospital they were trucked to the 22nd Replacement Battalion where they were deloused, bathed, issued new clothing, and assigned to quarters.

2. Then, in groups of twenty, they were brought to Headquarters, Fifteenth Air Force, for A-2 interrogation. Next, they were taken to the A-1 Combat Crew section, which, in connection with the AG Battle Casualty Section, arranged for them to fill out forms so other necessary data could be obtained. Upon completion of this process they were sent to their units for approximately two days before returning to the 22nd Replacement Battalion. From there it was planned to take them to Naples by special train on or about the tenth of September which will be in time for them to be returned to the United States by the first available water transportation.

3. Arrangements are now being made for this personnel to be billeted at the 19th Replacement Battalion for the time that they are in the Naples area and they will be trucked from the 19th directly to the boat at sailing time. All Fifteenth

Air Force personnel will be given Fifteenth Air Force shoulder patches and a personal letter signed by General Twining.

4. At the 22nd Replacement Battalion every effort was made to make this personnel as comfortable as possible. Extra rations were drawn so that all personnel had fresh meat and vegetables and additional supplies of cigarettes, candy, etc. The Red Cross cooperated in furnishing Red Cross kits containing toilet articles, cigarettes, etc., to this personnel. The personnel that were evacuated that had come from the Eighth and Ninth Air Forces were handled in precisely the same way but arrangements are now completed for them to be flown directly to UK in two C-87's with extra tanks. They will be returned to their units in the Eighth and Ninth Air Forces and will then be sent back to the United States from UK.

5. The Fifteenth Air Force contemplates issuing a blanket order promoting all second lieutenants from this group of evacuees to first lieutenants prior to their being returned to the United States.

6. Security. Returnees were all briefed immediately upon landing at Bari Airport and were told not to discuss any of their experiences with anyone until they had been properly indoctrinated at the time of interrogation. Subsequently all signed the following oath:

"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 to 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."

7. Identification was difficult to cross-check in many cases and was often left purely on the individual's say-so. In those cases where whole crews had been rescued, each substantiated the other's statements. It would, however, have been relatively easy for imposters to have avoided detection.

IV. INTERROGATION

1. Virtually all the stories the men told were identical except in anecdotal detail, for virtually all had been captured at once and detained under the same general conditions. The detailed interrogations of Lt. Col. Gunn and Snaith which are attached (TABS E & F) typify the lot. Assessing their talks with the 1162 people, the Fifteenth Air Force's Intelligence officers commented (TAB D):-

"On the whole, the attitude of the Rumanian people to the airmen was friendly, when they were shot down, they were usually greeted by Rumanians armed with pitchforks and occasionally by Rumanian soldiers, but no violence ever took place.

"If captured by country folk, the airmen were taken to a house and given refreshment while the local police were sent for. The Rumanians were always loyal to their country and handed over the airmen as soon as possible.

"Most of the men were shot down in the PLOESTI area and were taken to the Army Headquarters in PLOESTI where they had a short questioning, then they were sent to the PW Camps in BUCAREST.

"Before actually entering these camps, the airmen were held at King MICHAEL'S REGIMENT GARRISON for a short time and were again questioned. They were given a form with a number of personal questions which, they were told, were necessary for informing the Red Cross of their location. Most of the airmen filled in the form as far as personal and home questions were concerned, but all refused to answer the questions on their military formations.

"One or two airmen were segregated from their fellows and sent to a political prison across the road from the main camp. Here they were put in solitary confinement for 48 hours, then very mildly questioned. They refused to answer any questions and were told that they were quite the stupidest men the interrogator had ever met.

"When inside the PW camps, the men lived a normal PWs life. They were not subjected to any particularly bad treatment and certainly no physical ill treatment. The food was very poor at first, but that was improved when arrangements were made for the PWS to be paid.

"Conditions in the EM's camp were not quite so good as in the officers' camp. Food was the main difference. The EM were given the same food as the Rumanian soldier, and the diet was very poor. Vegetable soup was the staple meal during the day, with a cup of weak tea or coffee and a piece of black bread for breakfast.

"Recreational facilities in the camps were poor. Volley ball was played and later basketball in the officers' camp. Books were available, but until the last few days before the capitulation of the Rumanian Government, these had been supplied by a woman worker of the Rumanian BLUE CROSS. Plays were organized by the FWS themselves, with very little help from the camp authorities. Services were held on Sunday in the officers' camp, but it was only after a great deal of agitation on the part of the officers that the Padre was allowed to hold services in the EM's camp and the hospital.

"Washing facilities on the whole were poor, although there was plenty of cold water available. Latrines were of the squat type and were entirely inadequate for the numbers to be catered for."

2. Health. Two detailed medical reports are attached

(TABS G & H). Excerpts:-

"Until June 1944, the only POW hospital in BUCHAREST was a small four-room building in the Enlisted Men's camp, run by an American officer and three sergeants. The conditions in this hospital, in which there were thirty enlisted men and ten officers, were very bad. The patients had to sleep on wooden bed boards with only a very poor straw mattress and one sheet which was changed about once a month.

"There was no Roumanian staff attached to the hospital so that all the work of nursing and keeping the building clean had to be done by the three sergeants.

"The rooms under normal circumstances would have been quite well ventilated but with the overcrowding and the smell from neglected wounds, the atmosphere was unbearable.

"Food for the patients had to be carried from the Main Camp cookhouse and was very poor in quality, consisting mainly of weak vegetable soup for lunch and dinner, weak tea or coffee and a piece of bread for breakfast.

"The officer patients got slightly better food as the POW's were fed under the same system as the Roumanian Army where the O R's got maize porridge, soup and black bread while the officers have meat, etc.

"No special diets were available for POW's suffering from jaundice, ulcers or stomach troubles although milk was sometimes issued.

"No Red Cross parcels were received and only one visit was paid by the Red Cross representative during the three months prior to May. The patients were, however, visited frequently by a woman member of the Roumanian Blue Cross organization.

"There was no dressing room or operating theatre in the hospital. Any patients requiring treatment or an operation were carried on a stretcher through the streets to another hospital about three-fourths of a mile away, and after the treatment or operation they were carried back immediately.

"The main trouble seemed to be a complete lack of interest on the part of the Roumanian authorities as medical stores appeared to be available when enough fuss was made. Clean bandages were produced and occasionally SULFA drugs were used, their efficiency was, however, impaired somewhat by the length of time wounds were left without the dressing being changed. This was sometimes fifteen days.

"In June 1944, the patients were all moved to a new two-story building. This building was not completed but was already being used as a hospital by the Roumanians. The POW's were given half the top story, the other half being occupied by Roumanians suffering from VD in its various stages.

"However, conditions were a slight improvement on the previous building as the POW's had proper spring hospital beds. They still had only one sheet per bed and this had to be washed frequently by the POW staff as sheets were only changed by the Roumanian staff once a month.

"There was still no dressing room or operating theatre in the building so the patients were once more carried through the streets to the other hospital.

"Medical stores varied in quantity a great deal. There was plenty of iodine to be had, in fact it was used for every disinfecting job possible, but SULFA drugs were very scarce and that which was used, the POW's are sure came from the Airmen's escape kit."

* * * * *

"All the patients interviewed observed that the general standard of the medical care which they received in Roumania was much lower than that to which they have become accustomed in the United States. They noticed that the doctors, in general, did not appear well trained, although there were, of course, some exceptions to this observation. The nursing care was poor and there was a great scarcity of all types of medical supplies and equipment. Sulfa drugs were unobtainable and the supplies of morphine were limited. On the other hand, those patients who received medical attention from the Germans before being released to the Roumanians, observed that their equipment was good and their medical supplies ample. This caused some bitterness on the part of the Roumanian medical officers, who complained that while the Germans had ample medical supplies, they would not release these materials to the Roumanians.

"The low general standard of medical proficiency reported by our airmen is confirmed by a review of the hospitalized cases. The statements of the patients,

that amputations of the extremities were performed at the slightest provocation, are supported by the large number of such cases among our evacuees. This is partly explained by the fear of infection, on the part of the Roumanian doctors, a fear somewhat justified because of the lack of drugs. This, however, would not explain some of the amputations which appeared to result from their policy 'when in doubt, amputate'.

3. Cases of Ill Treatment. For the most part the returnees stated that they had not been afforded any ill treatment while in Rumanian hands. There are only a few cases of ill treatment noted. One of these cases involved a special group of OSS personnel who were captured. These men were not beaten up or physically maltreated in any way but were put in solitary confinement for 90 days. The first 14 days they were kept in complete darkness, were taken out, questioned and then put back in complete darkness for another 20 to 24 days. They were taken out, questioned again and placed back in ordinary confinement for the rest of the 90 day period. At the end of this period they were put in with the other prisoners. Another case of ill treatment did not involve physical violence. Staff Sergeant Peter J. Beyerle escaped from confinement and was re-captured by the Rumanians. He was sentenced to solitary confinement for 10 days and was put into an extremely dirty cell. After 5 days confinement a Colonel who was commandant of the camp came in to visit him. The Colonel was intoxicated and was persuaded to release Sergeant Beyerle who was then allowed to mess with the other prisoners for a two-week period. At the end of this period he was put on a train to Slobosek (a correction camp for Russians), was held at this camp for about one month. During this time he received half rations of food. He was placed in a small room with 25 Russian partisans, received no exercise, although he stated he did chop wood for exercise. He and the Russians were locked in the room at night and were not allowed outside

at all. Pans in the room were the only means they had of relieving themselves during the night. The latrines were just holes in the ground. The only water they had for washing was in a bucket which was brought to the room and with a mug to scoop the water out. There were no lights in the room or heating facilities. They were not permitted any tobacco or cigarettes. During the month that Sgt. Beyerle was there he underwent no physical violence. It is considered, however, that this was a second punishment for the same offense in violation of Geneva Convention rules.

4. Morale. By the time the evacuees had been deloused and fed at Bari their morale was top-notch. In Roumania, however, it appears to have sagged quite low. Col. Kraiger commented that a surprising number showed war-weariness, expressing dread that they might not be able "to take it again" if returned to combat duty and evincing an eagerness to loaf out the war in the lush Bucharest villas that suddenly opened to them after August 23rd. No evidence emerged, however, to indicate that any of the evacuees had originally bailed out deliberately to avoid further combat.

5. Capture Intelligence. No data about the enemy of any value was produced by any of the rescued men. This was attributed by the interrogators to the fact that all had been captured immediately. Apparently the converse was not true - many of the evacuees appear to have let much too much information out of the bag to their captors. Captain Parsons, who interrogated several of the groups early in the processing of the evacuees, stated that he was impressed with the laxity in security of the returnees while they were in Roumanian hands. It was his impression that they were easily drawn out by their interrogators, being cozened into arguments and discussions in which they gave out considerable information. The Roumanians

would also speak freely of the information they already had, which appeared to be considerable, and the prisoners would then fill in with additional information. For example, the Rumanians seemed to know a day in advance of an impending raid, which impressed the prisoners very much. They would also tell the prisoners of their position in the formation and the number of planes in the formation and would thereby obtain additional information from the prisoners. Many of the prisoners carried diaries on their flights and these diaries were the source of considerable intelligence data for the Roumanians. Another source was laundry tags on clothing which gave the location of units. Some of the crews claimed that they had never been briefed as to what they should or should not say upon capture by the enemy. It is felt that briefing of crews as to their behavior after capture has not been sufficiently emphasized and that the giving of only name, rank and serial number should be emphatically stressed.

6. Public Relations. Operation REUNION was regarded by newspaper correspondents in Italy as the biggest air story yet (TAB K). To help them cover it, a selected seven correspondents were flown in to Bucharest with the rescue formation, while others flocked to Bari in a special plane. All told they filed 150,000 words about it; on the first day the wordage came within a few thousand of equaling that filed on D-day of the invasion of Southern France.

7. Relations with Roumanians and Russians. It was very evident that the Roumanian officials and population in general were very anxious to bend over backwards to gain the good will of the United States and their representatives and to impress them with the fact that they were now co-belligerents and wanted to be on the same relative status as the Italians. The impres-

sion gained is that the Roumanians do not want the Russians to take over their country and, as a preventative to such a move, strongly desire that either American or British forces - preferably American - maintain a commission or even a standing army in Roumania. By the time REUNION III was in process the Russians had begun to requisition transport wherever they found it. This included some of the vehicles being used by the Americans. In no other respect, however, did the Russians thwart or interfere with the American air activity. Few Russian aircraft were visible and these ignored the U.S. bombers. Col. Kraiger, as a precaution, called on the Russian Colonel in command in Bucharest, told him about the U.S. evacuation plans. The Russian courteously agreed to inform the Red Air Force.

V. CONCLUSIONS

1. It is the opinion of the M.A.A.F committee that
 - a. Operationally the Fifteenth did a well-nigh perfect job.
 - b. The processing of the evacuees was likewise exemplary, with the possible exception of interrogation. It is believed that, due to the size and suddenness of the task, not as much information was obtained from the evacuees as might be desired. Since similar large-scale rescues are likely in the near future, it is suggested that a detailed questionnaire be worked out and that it be S.O.P. in such cases hereafter for each evacuee to fill out such a questionnaire himself, for the record, after being interrogated in the usual fashion.
 - c. Greater emphasis should be placed on briefing crews about how to avoid revealing information if captured.

JAMES PARTON, Lt. Col., A.C.
G. B. ROBBINS, Lt. Col., A.C.
R. B. NELSON, Lt. Col., A.C.
HOWARD ARK, Major, A.C.

HEADQUARTERS
FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE

FIELD ORDER - OPERATION GUNN

(Note:- This order was never actually put on the teletype since the Wing Commanders came to Hq. Fifteenth Air Force to be briefed.)

15 AF
28 AUG 44
FO
MAPS: NORMAL
TWINING

111 An American and Roumanian Officer recently arrived at this Headquarters from Bucharest bearing the report that Popesti Airdrome near Bucharest is firmly held by Roumanian forces and that a large number of American personnel are in the vicinity awaiting evacuation.

222 This AF will execute an operation to be known as Operation GUNN, the purpose of which is to transport American personnel and radio equipment to Popesti Adrm and establish positive and continuous point to point communications between this detachment and OSS Bari. It is hoped that a successful execution of Operation GUNN will enable us to evacuate American air crew personnel from the Bucharest area to Italy.

The first phase of Operation GUNN will be executed by three P-51 aircraft which will proceed to Bucharest area to verify friendly status of the airdrome. One of these P-51 aircraft, piloted by the Roumanian officer, will land at Popesti Airdrome and signal the status of the airdrome to the other two aircraft by pyrotechnic flares. The other two aircraft will then relay this message in code by radio to Italy.

The second phase of Operation GUNN will be to transport the detachment of communication personnel and their equipment to Popesti Airdrome. This phase of the operation will be carried out by Two B-17's escorted by 32 P-51's operating in two shifts of 16 aircraft each.

333 AAA

(1) 306 Wg will provide 3 P-51 AC and 2 pilots to carry out the first phase of this operation. They will land at Bari airport at 1700 B 28 Aug, and report to Brig. Gen. Born, Headquarters 15th AF.

At 0800 B 29 Aug these 3 AC will take off for Bucharest. One of these AC will be piloted by Captain Cantacugino of Roumanian AF. They will proceed direct to Popesti Adrm. The call signs of these AC will be as follows using VHF Channel A:

^C ^Z
Capt. Kantacucino call sign FUNNEL.
Lt. Col. Daniels call sign NORMAL.
Lt. Goehausen call sign HOMEMADE.
Lt. Bohn call sign CHEERUP.

Capt. Cantacucino will land at Popesti Adrm. The 3 remaining P-51's will circle within sight of the adrm and await a signal from Capt. Cantacucino. Immediately upon landing Capt. Cantacucino will investigate to determine whether or not the adrm is still firmly held by Roumanian forces. As soon as he has satisfied himself as to the status of the adrm he will signal to the P-51's in the air using the following signals:

Double yellow star means the adrm firmly held by Roumanian forces, all clear for B-17's to proceed to Bucharest and land.

Double red star means situation unsafe for landing of Allied AC.

Single green means stand by for 5 more minutes.

If no signal is received within 15 minutes after Capt. Cantacucino lands, the P-51's in the air will assume that situation is unsafe for landing of Allied AC.

As soon as signal has been received from Capt. Cantacucino or when 15 minutes have passed, whichever is the sooner, the 3 P-51 AC will set course for Bari and establish radio contact as soon as possible with BIGFENCE on Channel A VHF. As soon as contact has been established with BIGFENCE they will give the status of the Popesti Adrm as follows: the phrase "I HAVE SIX ZERO SIX GALLONS OF GAS REPEAT SIX ZERO SIX" will mean Popesti Adrm firmly held by Roumanian forces, all clear to dispatch B-17's.

The phrase "ceiling and visibility zero zero rept zero zero" will mean situation unsafe for landing of Allied AC at Popesti Adrm, do not dispatch B-17's.

Example of message would be: Hello Bigfence, this is Normal, I have six zero six gallons of gas rpt six zero six, over. Hello Normal, this is Bigfence, your message received and understood, out.

333 BBB 5 Wg will dispatch 2 B-17's with full combat crews and full gas and ammunition load to arrive at Bari airport at 0700B 29 Aug. They will report upon arrival to Capt. Dobin at the 15th AF Flight Section. Immediately upon arrival they will be fitted with special bomb bay racks for loading of personnel and equipment. All equipment to be carried will be loaded immediately thereafter. At 1000B, crews of these AC and all passengers will stand by at the operations bldg 15 AF Flight Section fully prepared for take off on 30 minutes notice. They will remain on this alert status until they receive orders to execute the mission or until relieved by orders of this Hqs. Upon receipt of the order of execution these 2 AC with the passengers and equipment will proceed to Bucharest Popesti Adrm. Escort will be provided as specified in Para 333 CCC.

Trout: Bari to tnpt Ragusa (4231, 1823) to tnpt Duna Milanovac (4429, 2206) to tnpt Rusanestii (4357, 2436) to tnpt Draganesti (4407, 2536) to Popesti Adrm.

Keypt: Ragusa (4231, 1823).
Keypt Altd: 12,000 Ft.
Keypt Time: To be specified verbally.
Flight Altd: 12,000 Ft.
Indicated cruising speed: 170 MPH.

When about 30 miles from Popesti one flight of 8 P-51's will leave the bombers and go to Popesti Adrm to receive the signal to land or return to base. They will then rejoin the bombers and tell them to land or to return to base using the following signals: series of small dives and zooms, the standard landing signal, will mean OK to land.

Rocking of wings followed by sharp breakaway will mean return to base.

Upon receiving the signal to land, the B-17's will circle the Adrm to the left with wheels down and land while fighters provide cover over the adrm.

After landing, the B-17's will be unloaded as rapidly as possible. If any American personnel are at the airdrome available for immediate loading, a maximum of ten per B-17 may be evacuated to Italy. B-17's must unload and take off again as quickly as possible since endurance of P-51's covering the airdrome will be very limited.

Route back: Reciprocal of route out.

Fighters Bomber communication will be on Channel A, VHF.

Fighters call sign BREAKFAST.
Bombers call sign LETTER.
Bomber recall identification codeword: SKIPPER.
Air-Ground communication.
Frequency 6015 KC.
Schroeder call sign 25B.
Kerns call sign 63H.
Ground station call sign 82H.

333 CCC

(1) 306 Wing will provide 32 P-51 AC, divided into two flights of 16 AC each.

(2) One flight will line rendezvous with bomber formation of two B-17 AC enroute to Bucharest, and provide close escort to destination, Popesti Adrm. Approximately 30 miles from Bucharest, 8 of the escorting 8 of the escorting fighters will leave the formation to precede the bombers over Popesti Adrm. These fighters will observe flare signals from the ground designed to inform them of the friendly or enemy status of the fields.

A double yellow star will indicate a friendly situation with the bombers cleared to land. A double red star will indicate situation unsafe for landing of Allied aircraft.

The fighters will then return to the bomber formation to relay this signal by following means: series of small dives and zooms, standard landing signal, will mean AC to land.

Rocking of wings followed by sharp breakaway will mean return to base. In the event the bombers land, the fighter escort will provide top cover over the airdrome.

(3) The second flight of 16 fighters will rendezvous with the bombform over Popesti Airdrome and will provide top cover and WDR escort.

(4) Fighter escort will atk and dest any other fighters appearing in the Popesti Airdrome area. No AC other than fighters will be atk. Roumanian JU-52's may be sighted. Absolutely will not be attacked. Absolutely no strafing will be conducted.

(5) Fighter-bomber communication will be on Channel A, VHF.

Fighter call sign **BREAKFAST**

Bomber call sign **LETTER**

Fighter recall identification codeword will be **BLACKJACK**.

HEADQUARTERS
FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE

FIELD ORDER - OPERATION REUNION I

SECRET
15 AF
30 AUG 44
FO 62 AAA
MAPS: NORMAL
TWINING

111 OMTD

222 AF will conduct evacuation mission designated Operation REUNION.

333 AAA 5 WG 38 B-17 AC.

- (1) 38 B-17 AC will land at Bucharest/Popesti Adrm, load Allied air crew personnel in each of 36 AC and 10 men in each of 2 litter-bearing AC, and evacuate them to Bari arpt.

36 AC will have special bomb bay racks to accomodate personnel. 2 AC will be equipped for litter cases.

Each AC will carry a crew of six consisting of pilot, copilot, navigator, engineer--top turret gunner, radio operator gunner, and tail gunner.

Each AC will carry a full load of fuel and reduced load of ammunition.

- (2) AC will be divided into 5 waves of 12 AC each, and a fourth wave of 2 litter bearing AC. Waves will be dispatched at one hour intervals.

Keypt Time: First Wave: 0800 B.
Second Wave: 0900 B.
Third Wave: 1000 B.
Fourth Wave: 1100 B.

First wave will land at Popesti Adrm approximately 1000 B.

Subsequent waves land at one hour intervals.

Rtout: Base to Keypt Kolaj (4153, 1930) to tnpt Lipljan (4232, 2108) to tnpt Prcenjeve (4307, 2156) to tnpt Zimnicea (4340, 2522) to Popesti Adrm.

Rtbk: Reciprocal of rtout.

Keypt Altd: 10,000 ft.

Flight altd will be at medium altd, AC remaining beneath cloud base if possible.

333 BBB 306 WG

- (1) Provide adequate cover for B-17 AC during landing and take off from Popesti Adrm.
- (2) Provide adequate cover for B-17 AC during landing and take off from Popesti adrm.
- (3) Fighter esc will tak and dest any enemy fighters appearing in tgt area. No AC other than fighters will be atkd. Roumanian transport AC may be seen but will not be atkd. No strafing will be done by escorting fighters.
- (4) Employ adequate force to strafe parked AC on adrm located at approximately (4648, 2443) near town of Reghin. See annotated photos.

Tgt Time: 1000 B.

333 XXX

When each wave of B-17 AC is about 30 miles from Bucharest on Penet one flight of escorting fighters will leave formation to precede bombers over adrm. Actions which would be construed as hostile must be avoided. These fighters will observe flare signals from the ground, designed to inform them of the friendly or enemy status of the field. A double yellow star will indicate a friendly situation with the bombers clear to land. A double red star will indicate situation unsafe for landing of Allied aircraft. Fighters will return to bombers to relay this signal as follows:

Series of small dives and zooms will mean OK to land.
Rocking of wings followed by sharp breakaway will mean return to base.

If no flare signal is observed fired from the ground, fighters will signal bombers to return to base.

B-17 will circle adrm to the left with wheels down to land, while fighters provide adrm cover.

Loading and take off will be accomplished as quickly as possible.

444 OMTD

555 AAA

- (1) VHF Call signs:

| | | | |
|----------------------|-----------|------|----------|
| Bombers, First Wave: | VEALPIE | ESC: | GASSTOVE |
| Second Wave: | BREAKFAST | ESC: | HIGHGANG |
| Third Wave: | HOMEMADE | ESC: | SULPHUR |
| Fourth Wave: | REWARD | ESC: | SQUANDER |

Bomber fighter communication on Channel AAA.
Bomber bomber communication on Chan BBB.

- (2) Recall identification code words:
Bombers: DUCKSOUP.
Fighters: Esc: BARFLY.

(3) W/T air ground communication 6015 KC

Bomber call signs: First Wave 05A
Second Wave 37A
Third Wave 28F
Fourth Wave 85J

Ground Station call sign: 82H (to be operated by
Hq 15 AF Bari).

SD-0220 Authenticator and CD-0251 Middle East (Rekoh)
will be employed.

(4) All radio communication will be held at a minimum.

HEADQUARTERS
FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE

FIELD ORDER - OPERATION REUNION II

SECRET
15 AF
31 AUG 44
FO 64 AAA
MAPS: NORMAL
TWINING

111 OMTD

222 AF will conduct evacuation mission designated Operation REUNION TWO.

333 AAA 5 Wg 16 B-17 AC.

- (1) 16 B-17 AC will land at Bucharest/Popesti Adrm, load 20 Allied air crew personnel in each of 15 AC, and 10 men in one litter-bearing AC, and evacuate them to Bari arpt.

15 B-17 AC will have special bomb bay racks to accommodate personnel. One AC will be equipped for litter cases.

Each AC will carry a crew of 6 consisting of Pilot, Copilot, Engineer-Top Turret Gunner, Radio Operator Gunner, and Tail Gunner.

Each AC will carry a full load of fuel and reduced load of ammunition.

16 B-17 AC will fly in one wave.

Keypt Time: 0930 B.

Rtout: Base to keypt Kolaj (4153, 1930) to tnpt Lipljan (4232, 2108) to tnpt Pecenjeve (4307, 2156) to tnpt Zimnicea (4340, 2522) to Popesti Adrm.

Keypt Altd: 10,000 ft.

Flight altd will be at medium altd; AC remaining beneath cloud base if possible.

333 BBB 306 Wg

- (1) Provide adequate cover on Penet and WDR for bombform.
- (2) Provide adequate cover for B-17 AC during landing and take-off from Popesti Adrm.
- (3) Fighter esc will atk and dest any enemy fighters appearing in tgt area. No AC other than fighters will be atkd. Roumanian transport AC may be seen but will not be atkd.

No rpt No strafing will be conducted by escorting fighters.

333 XXX

- (1) B-17 AC will circle adrm to the left with wheels down to land while fighters provide adrm cover. Actions which would be construed as hostile must be avoided.

Loading and take-off of B-17 AC will be accomplished as quickly as possible.

444 OMTD

555 AAA

- (1) VHF Call Signs

Bombers: VEALPIE Esc: GASSTOVE
Bomber Fighter Communication on Chan AAA
Bomber Bomber Communications on Chan BBB.

- (2) Recall Identification Code Word

Bombers: DUCKSOUP
Fighters: BARFLY

- (3) W/T Air Ground Communication on 6530 KC.

Bomber call sign 05A.
Ground station call sign 82H (to be operated by HQ 15 AF at Bari).
SD-0220 authenticator and CD-0251 Middle East (Rekoh) will be employed.
MS/OK will be transmitted after leaving Popesti Adrm.

- (4) All radio communication will be held to a minimum.

HEADQUARTERS
FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE

FIELD ORDER - OPERATION REUNION III

15 AF
2 SEPT 44
FO 68 AAA
MAPS: NORMAL
TWINING

111 OMTD.

222 AF will conduct Operation REUNION THREE. One C-47 AC and 3 B-17 AC will be dispatched to Bucharest/Popesti Adrm and return on 3 Sept 44.

333 AAA

(1) 1 C-47 will proceed with esc to Popesti Adrm from Amendola. Cargo: 1 B-17 wing panel and repair crew. Gas for round trip will be carried. Keypt Time: 0927B. Keypt Altd: 10,000 Ft. Control Pt Time: 1018B. Flight will be conducted at medium altd. Rt out: Base to Keypt Kolau (4153, 1930) to tnpt Lipljan (4232, 2108) to control pt Pecenjeve (4307, 2156) to tnpt Zimnicea (4340, 2522) to Popesti Adrm. Rtbk: Will be flown in formation with flight of 3 B-17 AC. Rtout must be adhered to closely in order to avoid flak positions. Imperative that keypt time and altd be followed as scheduled to effect fighter rendezvous.

333 BBB 5 WG 3 B-17 AC.

(1) 3 B-17 AC equipped with special bombbay racks will proceed with esc to Popesti Adrm to evacuate air crew personnel. Each B-17 AC will carry crew of 6 composed of Pilot, Co-pilot, Navigator, Engineer-Top Turret Gunner, Radio Operator and Tail Gunner.

Each AC will carry full load of fuel and reduced load of ammunition.

Keypt Time: 0934B.
Control Pt Time: 1018B.
Time of arrival at Popesti Adrm: 1130B.
Rtout same as specified for C-47 AC on Par 333 AAA.
Rtbk: Reciprocal of Rtout.
Keypt Altd: 10,000 ft.
Flight will be conducted at medium altd.

333 CCC 306 WG

- (1) Provide close esc on Penet, for C-47 AC.
- (2) Provide close esc on Penet for 3 B-17 AC.

(3) Provide adrm cover during take off and close esc on WDR for formation of 3 B-17 and 1 C-47 AC. These fighter AC will land at Popesti Adrm at 1300B to wait until formation is ready to return.

333 XXX

Timing of rtout is designed to have B-17 formation with esc and C-47 AC with esc pass control pt South of Niz at same time. This will provide mutual support in case of atk by enemy AC.

* B-17 and C-47 AC will approach Popesti Adrm from south with wheels down and will circle adrm to the left.

* Flare signals will be fired from the ground at the Adrm. Two yellow stars will indicate field still in friendly hands, and AC clear to land. Two red stars will indicate status of field unsafe and AC should return to base.

* Penet esc will return to base after B-17 AC and C-47 AC have landed at Popesti.

* Penet esc will contact BIGFENCE as early as possible on return route to advise them of safe arrival of B-17 AC and C-47 at Popesti Adrm.

* WDR esc will arrive at Popesti at 1300B and land.

* B-17 AC and C-47 will take off with esc when ready and will return to base.

444 OMTD

555 AAA

(1) VHF Call Signs

On Penet:

C-47 AC BELLBOY 2 Esc PUMPUP 2
B-17 AC RINGWAY Esc DAYLONG

On WDR:

B-17 and C-47 AC RINGWAY Esc DAYLONG
Chan "A"

(2) Recall codewords

B-17 MARSHLAND
C-47 FLATBUSH
Fighters SNAKEBITE

(3) W/T 6035 KC

Excerpts from MASAF INTOPS SummariesINTOPS #406, 31 August

SPECIAL MISSION: 38 B-17's of 2 and 97 Bomb Groups (5 Wing), with escort of 94 P-38's and 1, 14 and 82 Fighter Groups and 158 P-51's of 31, 325 and 332 Fighter Groups were dispatched.

36 B-17's, 91 P-38's and 146 P-51's successfully completed the mission. 3 P-38's and 12 P-51's returned early. 2 B-17's are at friendly fields.

OPPOSITION: Scant to moderate heavy flak at NIS. 2 JU 52's were encountered and destroyed by 31 F.G. 2 Me 109's were encountered enroute, 1 was damaged.

| <u>UNIT</u> | <u>CLAIMS</u> | <u>LOST</u> | <u>MISSING</u> |
|-------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1 F.G. | 0-0-1 | 1 P-38 (E/A) | 0 |
| 31 F.G. | 2-0-0 | 0 | 0 |

INTOPS #408, 2 September

SPECIAL MISSION - 29, 31 August and 1 September: In the first major operation of its kind, after careful preliminary planning and groundwork, 411 Fifteenth Air Force aircraft were dispatched to the RUMANIAN Airdrome of Popesti and evacuated a total of 1099 American Air Force personnel, former prisoners of war, evaders and escaped officers and men. The evacuation force dispatched in small formations under heavy fighter escort, but the operation was almost unopposed and completely successful. 56 B-17's of 5 Wing and 94 P-38's and 261 P-51's of 306 Wing provided transportation and escort for the mission.

INTOPS #409, 3 September

SPECIAL EVACUATION MISSION: 3 B-17's with escort of 34 P-51's were dispatched by 2 Bomb Group (5 Wing) and 31 Fighter Group (306 Wing).

3 B-17's landed safely at POTES TI A/D, Roumania and evacuated 27 Army Air Force personnel to Italian bases.

20 P-51's escorted the penetration and 13 P-51's escorted on withdrawal. 1 P-51 remained at POTES TI A/D. Fighters on penetration reported SAH flak at PLOESTI, otherwise there was no opposition or incident.

COPY

HEADQUARTERS
MEDITERRANEAN ALLIED AIR FORCES
Office of the Air Inspector

5 September 1944

SUBJECT: Summary of Evacuation of ex-Prisoners of War
from Rumania to Italy.

TO: Commanding General, MAAF

By approval of the Provisional Rumanian Government, Lt. Col. Gunn was flown by Rumanian Captain Cantacucino in an ME 109 from Popesti airdrome, near Bucharest, to Italy on 27 August to arrange for evacuation of American prisoners of war.

On 29 August around 0800 hours Captain Cantacucino, in a P-51, escorted by three P-51's, flew to Popesti and by prearranged Verey pistol signal informed the escort that the airdrome was under Rumanian control. The P-51's transmitted this information by radio to Bari and at 1215 hours two B-17's with fighter escort took off for Popesti. A landing party of twelve men with two radio sets was aboard.

The landing was made at Popesti at 1530 hours without incident. The party was met by several Rumanian officials including Mr. Rica Georgescu, Secretary of State and Minister of National Economy. The B-17's took off immediately for the return flight to Italy and the party proceeded to Bucharest.

At Bucharest, in addition to Mr. Georgescu, several other Rumanian officials were contacted in connection with the evacuation. A rather difficult problem was the arrangement for bus and truck transportation from the camps to the airport. At that time there were approximately 800 men in a camp on the southwest side of Bucharest and about 100 in Pitrositza. Lt. Col. Snaith, Major Yeager and Major Bean, senior American POW were coordinating. The prisoner camp and the hospital were visited and 50 Red Cross kits were distributed among the hospital cases. Commander of the Russian troops was contacted and informed of the evacuation to start on the 31st.

Radio stations were set up, but for mechanical and atmospheric reasons no contact was made with Bari, during the 29th and 30th August.

On the 30th August, afternoon, all arrangements were completed for the evacuation of 800 men and since up to 1600 hours a radio contact with Bari was still lacking, Captain Cantacucino was dispatched at 1715 hours with a letter to the CG, 15th Air Force, giving the necessary information for the evacuation to start the following day.

The landings and departures of evacuation aircraft was as follows:

(Summary of Evacuation of ex-POWs from Rumania to Italy
cont'd, 5 Sept 44)

On 31 August -

12 B-17's landed at 1000 hours with two doctors and
medical supplies.

11 B-17's took off at 1030 (1 B-17 had a flat tire)

12 B-17's landed 1115 hours

12 B-17's took off 1145 hours

12 B-17's landed 1215

11 B-17's took off 1240 (1 B-17 was delayed because
of oil leak--loose oil pump-plug)

2 B-17's landed 1315 (ambulances with doctors)

3 B-17's took off 1425 (2 ambulances and the B-17
delayed with oil leak)

In above planes, a total of 739 POW were evacuated
including ten litter cases and 29 hospital cases.

On 1 September -

16 B-17's landed at 1145 hours (left wing panel on
1 B-17 blew up while landing, due to lack
of vent)

16 B-17's took off 1245 (this included 1 B-17 which had
flat tire on 31 August.

The 16 B-17's evacuated 393 ex POW's.

On 3 September

3 B-17's and 1 C-47 landed at 1130 hours. (The C-47
brought a repair crew, the wing panel for the
B-17, and the necessary tools and equipment)

13 P-51's escort for the return trip landed at 1315
hours.

13 P-51's, 3 B-17's and 1 C-47 took off at 1530 hours
for Italy.

Above planes carried 29 ex-POWs. All flights of the
B-17 had fighter escort. Total number of men evacuated was
1127 Americans, 31 British, 2 Dutch, 1 French -- a grand
total of 1161 men. All the evacuees were landed at Bari,
and processed by the 15th Air Force.

Only T/Sgt Peter Tierney from 460th Bomb Group remained.
This man has double phlebitis of legs and septicemia from
wounds and two doctors and medical supplies were left with
him.

(Summary of Evacuation of ex-POWs from Rumania to Italy
cont'd, 5 Sept 1944)

Broadcasts were made and notices were published in the Rumanian papers requesting any stranded American and British ex-POWs to report to Hotel Ambassador Bucharest and Major Ross from OSS remained in Bucharest to coordinate any further evacuation.

The Rumanian Provisional Government and Rumanian Air Force gave whole-hearted cooperation in this evacuation.

GEORGE KRAIGER,
Colonel, Air Corps.

HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520, U. S. Army

4 September 1944

The information in this report has been obtained from the interrogation of American airmen released from PW camps and Hospitals in BUCHAREST, RUMANIA, on 24 August 1944.

I. THE ATTITUDE OF THE RUMANIAN PEOPLE

On the whole, the attitude of the Rumanian people to the airmen was friendly, when they were shot down, they were usually greeted by Rumanians armed with pitchforks and occasionally by Rumanian soldiers, but no violence ever took place.

If captured by country folk, the Airmen were taken to a house and given refreshment while the local police were sent for. The Rumanians were always loyal to their country and handed over the airmen as soon as possible.

When in the hands of the police or the Rumanian Army, the airmen were treated well. They were invariably asked about their plane and the target, but this the airmen feel can be put down to curiosity as none of the questions asked were technical. In fact, one man who was on secret equipment was simply asked why there were two navigators on his plane. His reply was that he was there to keep an eye on the other man, and it was accepted by his questioner, so that although he was a potential source of much useful information to the enemy he was never questioned again.

Most of the men were shot down in the PLOESTI area and were taken to the Army Headquarters in PLOESTI where they had a short questioning, then they were sent to the PW Camps in BUCAREST.

Before actually entering these camps, the airmen were held at King MICHAEL'S REGIMENT GARRISON for a short time and were again questioned. They were given a form with a number of personal questions which, they were told, were necessary for informing the Red Cross of their location. Most of the airmen filled in the form as far as personal and home questions were concerned, but all refused to answer the questions on their military formations.

One or two airmen were segregated from their fellows and sent to a political prison across the road from the main camp. Here they were put in solitary confinement for 48 hours, then very mildly questioned. They refused to answer any questions and were told that they were quite the stupidest men the interrogator had ever met.

One airman of Jewish extraction, the Rumanians attempted to coerce by threatening to hand over to the Germans if he refused to answer the questions. He maintained his refusal, but nothing was done towards carrying out the threat.

When inside the PW camps, the men lived a normal PWS life. They were not subjected to any particularly bad treatment and certainly no physical ill treatment. The food was very poor at first, but that was improved when arrangements were made for the PWS to be paid.

The guards were friendly in their attitude towards the PWS, but they were to frightened of their senior officers to be of any assistance to the airmen.

The Roumanian interrogating officers visited the camp at fairly frequent intervals, and they were quite friendly. In fact, one went so far as to warn the officers that there was a man among the PWS who was giving information to the Camp Commandant.

Conditions in the EM's camp were not quite so good as in the officer's camp. Food was the main difference. The EM were given the same food as the Rumanian soldier, and the diet was very poor. Vegetable soup was the staple meal during the day, with a cup of weak tea or coffee and a piece of black bread for breakfast.

Here, also, the guards were quite friendly, but again would not cooperate with any plans of escape for fear of action by their officers.

Recreational facilities in the camps were poor. Volley ball was played and later basketball in the officers' camp. Books were available, but until the last few days before the capitulation of the Rumanian Government, these had been supplied by a woman worker of the Rumanian BLUE CROSS.

Plays were organized by the PWS themselves, with very little help from the camp authorities.

Services were held on Sunday in the officers' camp, but it was only after a great deal of agitation on the part of the officers that the Padre was allowed to hold services in the EM's camp and the hospital.

Washing facilities on the whole were poor, although there was plenty of cold water available. Latrines were of the squat type and were entirely inadequate for the numbers to be catered for.

As far as medical treatment was concerned, the chief trouble seemed to be the absolute lack of interest the Rumanian authorities had in either their own or the American sick. Dressings were left for extremely long periods without a change, although it appeared that there was no shortage of medical stores.

At least one American airman's death can be put down to lack of interest and another to carelessness. At one time, the PW section of the hospital was being run by 1 American officer and 2 sergeants, who had to make the beds, wash the patients, clean the wards out and do all the other nursing work in the hospital. The only time they saw nurses was when the Rumanian medical officer made his rounds, which was about twice a week.

After the capitulation, the new government did all in its power to ensure the safety of the American PW's. The camps were opened and steps were taken to protect them from the air raids and from the German ground troops.

When Colonel Gunn, USAF, came forward with his plan to fly to Italy and arrange for the evacuation of the other PWS, he received all the assistance possible, and when his first attempt failed, a Rumanian pilot immediately volunteered to fly him to Italy, hidden in the fuselage of a ME 109.

More detailed information on the conditions in the PW camps and hospital in BUCAREST and the PW camp at TIMISUL DEJOS is given in the reports on the detailed interrogation of Lt. Col. Gunn, Lt. Col. Snaith, and S/Sgt. Preihs which are attached.

A-2 Section

HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520 U. S. Army

30 August 1944

ESCAPE STATEMENT

Lt. Col. James A. Gunn III, O-385405, 454th Bomb Group, 304th Wing.

1. Personal History

Born - 28/5/1912

Enlisted - 1/3/1939

Home Address - Kelseyville, California

Peacetime Profession - Pullman Cor.

MIA - 17/8/44

RTD - 27/8/44

Duty - Wing Leader, flying deputy lead as Radar U.S.

Missions -32

2. Source's plane was flying deputy lead when it was hit by flak, the order was given to bale out when the plane was approximately 15 miles southeast of Floesti.

Source landed in an open field, as he came down he saw many people running towards the field so unharnessed himself and ran off into a cornfield. Source had injured himself slightly on landing so was unable to run more than 300 yards before he heard others coming towards him from his front. Source ran into the next field which had been harvested and hid inside a wheatsheaf.

When the population realized he was not in the wheatfield they began a systematic search of the surrounding area poking sticks into any likely hiding places so that it was not long before source was discovered.

The search party consisted of 2 armed Rumanian soldiers and about 75 civilians, when source was discovered there was no hostile move in fact they all appeared friendly. Source was asked if he was armed, he replied "no" but was searched.

The whole group moved off south to the village of Cornurile where source was taken to the local military Hq., while source was in this building there was a crowd of about 300 people around but they all appeared quite friendly and appeared there purely out of curiosity.

In this Hq. source was again searched and all his papers and belongings except his lighter, watch and ring were taken away and receipts given.

A message was sent from here but source has no idea of the destination, however after about an hour, during which source was fed and given a place to lie down, he was loaded into a hay cart and taken to the station about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from town.

At the station a lady, who source thinks was a Marquisa as the others showed great respect for her, gave him food and cigarettes. The party waited for about 1½ hours at the station, but no train came, during this period many people brought food and no attempt was made to stop him taking it.

After about 1½ hours wait a car came along so the Rumanian guards asked for a lift to Floesti. They set off and on the way picked up a lady who appeared extremely friendly and gave source sweets and cigarettes.

They all rode to a small town about 12 Km from Floesti where they left the car, in this town the party encountered some German guards who passed remarks about source but made no attempt to take him out of the custody of the Rumanian soldiers.

The escort stopped another car which took source and his guards into Floesti where source was taken to the Army Hq and Barracks. In this building source was taken into an office where he was to see a Rumanian Lt. Col. on the way to this office he saw his bombardier and navigator. While source was held in this building other members of his crew were brought in until 8 were present, the Rumanians also brought in a S/Sgt from another plane who was badly burned, he was given first aid on the spot then was taken to hospital.

After a preliminary examination and a few questions source was taken across the road to another enclosure where he was registered then taken to a room where a full Colonel of the Rumanian Army questioned source, it was not an interrogation but the trend of the conversation was an attempt to get information, however source gave no answers and after about 2 hours he was taken out to a wooden hut where, after some soldiers were kicked out, he was told he would live.

This hut was extremely dirty and insect ridden but the American Airmen had no alternative but to sleep there.

At about 2130 the air raid alarm went and all the airmen were put in a truck and taken about 8 miles out of town, there were also soldiers and civilians on the truck so source planned to escape when they all got off. When the truck stopped however the PW's were not allowed off, the guards surrounded it thereby making escape impossible.

The raid was by the RAF on the oil refineries but source has no knowledge of the damage done.

After about 2 hours here source and his companions were taken back into town and into the same hut.

The following morning (18/8/44) the PW's were given a thin vegetable soup and black bread for breakfast at about 0800 hours. At 1000 hours the air raid alarm again went so the PW's were once more loaded in the lorry and taken out of town, this time it was an American raid which lasted about 2 hours. Source could not see the results as there was a lot of smoke over the town.

The PW's were taken back to the enclosure and given lunch which consisted of once more soup and black bread.

In the enclosure the PW's were given complete freedom of the yard but were not allowed too close to the gate or to the fence across the back which was constructed of wood. The PW's began joking with the guards to gain their confidence so that they could get close enough to examine the gate and the fence. The gate was strong enough but the fence was found to be quite rotten in places.

Source after finding this out decided that the best thing he could do would be to wait for his leg to get really well then make an attempt to escape via the fence.

That night the air raid alarm again sent them out into the fields for about 2 hours, they returned and went to sleep in the hut with the guards inside the room. Source woke at about 0400 hours and found that the guards were all asleep, it was too late to attempt to get away then as dawn was breaking.

On the following morning source spoke with an EM and found that he had left his hut during the night without being challenged so he decided to make an attempt himself that night.

On the morning of 19/8/44 there was another raid and once again the PW's were taken out into the open country, this time source noticed that the guards were becoming very lax so decided that the following night would be a good time for him to make his attempt.

An American air gunner from this raid was brought into the camp but not allowed to live with the rest of the PW's. It was heard afterwards that a number of Rumanian civilians had been killed by the raid and this man was held as he was thought to be a bombardier. After questioning he was allowed to join the main group of PW's.

During the day of 19th source got as much sleep as possible to be ready for his night attempt.

That night he woke at 0100 hours and got up, the guards were asleep but one was right by the door, however source decided to make his attempt. He tried the door but found it locked, while he was fiddling with the latch the guard woke so source asked if he could go to the latrines which were outside. The guard agreed but went with him and accompanied him back to the hut.

The following morning (20/8/44) an NCO told source that the PW's would be going to Bucharest that day. The PW's were given no breakfast and at 0900 hours they were put on a truck and driven away.

The truck also had a load of grapes and about 6 casual passengers besides the 12 Americans. They were driven through the center of the town then taken to the NW section where they were put in the school which is used as an officers PW camp.

They were put in a small yard next to the building where all their possessions were again checked, the PW's were each given a note stating that they were to be allowed to keep their uniforms, lights and watches, etc.

While in this compound source was approached by a Rumanian NCO who whispered that he had a note for source and brought it along, the note said source should hide his money as it would be possible to use it later, source did so.

After awhile the airmen were all taken further out to the NW suburbs to a stockade near the marshalling yards where all personnel who had not yet been interrogated were held, from this stockade it was possible to see the EM's cage and the PW hospital.

The PW's were told that they would be interrogated so source went round warning everyone not to talk or give any information other than name, rank and number.

Conditions in this camp were not good, there were not enough blankets for 1 each and the food consisted of thin soup, black bread and bad coffee and milk.

On the afternoon of 21/8/44 a Rumanian Captain arrived, this man spoke fluent English as he had lived in the USA. He was to interrogate the Airmen and started by taking them in order of rank and by crews, source saw that by this means the number of planes involved would be disclosed so he insisted that each PW be called by name. After a man was interrogated he was not returned to the same room but sent off to the main part of the camp.

When source went in to the Captain he was given a form with a lot of questions and told that if he did not answer the questions it would be impossible to notify the International Red Cross of his capture.

Source refused to answer any of the questions asked. The Rumanian asked if it was personal dislike that made source take that attitude, source replied no, it was the Geneva convention that said he need not.

The Rumanian Captain in sources opinion was definitely a trained interrogater but the camp was not an interrogation centre.

After some time here the source was returned to the Senior officers section of the camp where he met other airmen including an RAF officer, the room to which he was allocated was fairly comfortable but the mattresses were very lousy.

The Americans were allowed to run their own mess and the internal administration of the camp was in their hands under the supervision of Major Timmish, USAAF.

During the evening of the 21st, source was told that there was a radio receiver hidden in the camp and also that there was an escape specialist. That night source listened to the news in Rumanian which was translated into English by the escape specialist. The same evening source was introduced to another man described as an escape specialist.

On the evening of 22nd source was told by Major Jaeger that there was an escape plan in operation which consisted of a tunnel dug by the officers. Four teams were working on it with lookouts posted to watch for guards.

On 23rd, source went with other officers and Rumanian officials to the Railway station to take delivery of the first Red X parcels to arrive in the camp. They were all in good condition and taken straight to the P/W Camp.

During the afternoon, a talk was given by a Rumanian lady (thought to be a Princess) in which she stressed the horrors of the Russian regime. She was an extremely able speaker and made quite an impression on some of the officers.

At 1600 hours, Red X representatives arrived with Rumanian officials to supervise the distribution of the parcels, these parcels being distributed absolutely untouched.

That night at 2215 hours, source heard of the Rumanian Government's decision to aid the Allies, nothing was said to the rest of the camp as the possession of the wireless set was still a secret, a meeting of the senior officers was held to form a plan of action as the Germans were known to be in Bucharest. It was decided that the Camp Commandant should be asked for arms and should be asked for permission to mount an officer with every Rumanian guard.

After the meeting the remainder of the officers were informed of the situation and told to sleep in their clothes and be ready for instant action.

The request for arms was refused as the Camp Commandant pleaded he could do nothing without the permission of higher authority, however, a phone call was made and shortly afterwards a full Colonel arrived. He told the P/Ws how glad the Rumanians were to be on the Allied side and gave orders that the guards were to be trebled and patrols sent out into the streets to guard against a German attack on the P/W camp.

Firing was heard in the streets so the P/W were allowed to have whatever arms were available - these turned out to be a small number of pistols and about 4-5 MAs. The Rumanian guards were kept on duty the whole time.

Nothing happened that night so the following morning (24/8/44), source got in touch with the EMS camp and was told that the situation was well in hand.

At 0940 hours, the air raid alarm went so the gates were opened and the P/Ws were allowed to go to slit trenches outside the camp. Bombs fell near the camp but there were no casualties. The bombing became frequent so that many of the P/Ws became nervous and wanted to leave, they were told that the city was surrounded but nevertheless some did go.

With the bombing the fighting inside the city became more intense so Col. Jaeger set off into town to try and find a wireless set with which to contact Cairo or possibly Fifteenth Air Force.

Colonel Snaith set off at the same time in an attempt to contact the International Red X with a view to evacuating the P/Ws, the last source heard of Col. Snaith was that he was in hiding somewhere in Bucharest.

Next morning (25/8/44) an English speaking Rumanian Lt. arrived to discuss the position of the P/Ws, at the same time wireless contact was made with Cairo but without much success. Source heard that there were weak spots in the circling Germans so he decided on an attempt to get the men out of town. He contacted the Rumanian Lt and asked to be taken to the Ministry of War where he put the plan for evacuation before the War Minister who agreed that an attempt should be made.

On the 25th, bombs fell on the EMs camp, killing 1 American airman so the Rumanian authorities decided to move the camp away from the railway.

The Rumanian Lt was sent off with a part of American officers and men to make a recce of the SW corner of the town where it was believed there was a gap in the German lines.

At the same time source asked to be allowed to fly to Italy to arrange help, this plan was put before the Rumanian C/S who readily agreed. Source had to promise to return as the plan was looked on with some suspicion and the whole plan had to go before the Air Minister.

The recce party returned after about an hour and reported that the SW area of the town was quite free from Germans except where they were holding out in isolated buildings, as a result of this report it was felt that with the Germans cleared from the town the best thing for the P/Ws was to stay in the city.

During the evening ^{was} Col. Jaeger returned with the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and told source that he, source, was to be sent to Italy via Turkey, that night. When source heard this he went to the Air Minister and asked to be allowed to fly that night. He was told that the night was impossible but he could leave next morning.

Source suggested then that an intelligent officer should accompany him to explain the situation fully when they arrived in Italy. Source spent the evening with the Foreign Secretary and next morning (26/8/44) went to the plane which was an old Savoia Maccheti. The crew were fully briefed on the route to take, source then returned to the Air Minister where he was told that 50 U.S. planes were on their way and would land in the area.

Then the Secretary of State for Air arrived with the news that 250 planes were due, bombers did in fact arrive and bombed enemy troops concentrations in the area. During this raid a number of Rumanians were killed which shook the morale of the population so source decided that he should take off as soon as possible.

The plane took off at 1300 hours, flew for 1/2 hour then had to turn back with engine trouble. When they arrived at the field a Rumanian pilot came forward and offered to fly source to Italy in the fuselage of an ME 109. This plan was put to the Air Minister who readily agreed and plans were made to leave at first light next day.

Source went out to dinner that night and discovered that everyone knew about the plan. When he discovered this, he returned to the aerodrome with the pilot and between them they decided the best thing they could do would be to leave during the afternoon.

The morning of the following day was spent in preparing the plane. The W/T set was removed and new markings were painted on.

Immediately the plane was ready, source and the Rumanian pilot climbed aboard and took off. They took off at 1720 hours, 27 August, 1944 and landed at San Giovanni at 1920 approximately the same evening. They encountered no trouble during the trip except slight engine misfiring when crossing the Adriatic.

2 September 1944

ESCAPE STATEMENT

1. Snaith, William G., Lt. Col. O-399635, Hq. 450th Bomb Group.
Born - 16 January 1916
Enlisted - 26 January 1934
Home Address - 6502 Midway Road, Dallas, Texas
Peacetime Profession - Student
MIA - 15 July 1944 RTD - 1 September 1944
Missions - Forty-one Duty on A/C-Pilot and Wing Leader

2. PRISON CAMPS.

LAGURAL. 13. BUCHAREST, ROUMANIA. Source was interned in this camp from 16 July 1944, until 1 August 1944, approximately.

3. CAPTURE.

15 July 1944. Source was flying a B-24 Bomber; and was leading his Wing (47th Wing) on a bombing raid on the AMERICANO ROUMANO OIL REFINERY, PLOESTI, ROUMANIA.

After the bomb run source turned the plane to rally, and must have been hit by flak, as he felt the ship lurch, and looking around found the bomb-bays a mass of flames. Source then had a blackout, as he remembers nothing more until he found himself in the air. He pulled his ripcord and landed in some low ground near the target area. Source saw the other aircraft complete their bombing, felt the bomb block, and was frequently covered in clouds of dust from bombs in his vicinity. Source remained in hiding in this low ground, but was captured by GERMAN and ROUMANIAN troops, who were looking for him, after about four hours.

Source was given to understand from these troops (and later from fellow prisoners in the camp) that his plane had exploded in midair, and that he was the only survivor.

After capture source had his face dressed in the field by a GERMAN first-aid man and was then sent to hospital suffering with second degree burns on his face. The following day he was sent to a camouflaged camp at PLOESTI and interned with other prisoners of war.

4. INTERROGATION.

Source was given a routine interrogation on 16 July, by a GERMAN Sergeant Major. He refused to answer any questions about missions or his aircraft.

The same day source was taken to Bucharest and on 17 July 1944, interrogated by the ROUMANIAN military authorities. This interrogation was similar to the GERMAN, and source again gave no information.

During both interrogations source was asked about the attitude of the "USA" towards RUSSIA, and why the "United States" was fighting ENGLAND's war. He was told that the Russians would ruin "Continental Culture". Source did not express his opinion, was well treated and never threatened.

5. ESCAPE.

The prisoners of war were liberated by the ROUMANIANS when an Armistice was declared on 23 August 1944. Most of the prisoners of war continued to live in the camp, although some, including source, moved out into the country or BUCHAREST town and were clothed in civilian clothes and fed by a PALESTINIAN agent in the RAF.

Two days later BUCHAREST was bombed by GERMAN aircraft and source returned to the camp as Senior Officer (25 August), where he lived until he was evacuated with the rest of the prisoners of war on 1 September 1944.

T. A. FELL,
First Lieutenant, AC,
Interrogator

3 Incls:
Appendix B, C, D.

APPENDIX B

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| 23 August 1944) 1 September 1944) | F/O CHANANI (RAF) A Palestinian working with "A Force". F/O BECKER (RAF) | Provided source with money and civilian clothes. Hid and clothed many USA Troops in BUCHAREST. |
| | F/O RUBENS) F/O MACAS) (RAF) | |
| | Both prisoners of war | with source. Helped CHANINI in his work. |
| 23 August 1944) 1 September 1944) | The BRACADIHU Family BREWERS BUCHAREST | Provided contact for buying food, for which source paid. |
| | A Jew called SHAPEIRO | Very Pro-Allie. Hid a number of prisoners of war in town. |

APPENDIX C

1 - 7. Nil.

8. All submitted to "15 AFHQ".

APPENDIX D

1. A camp Escape Committee was in existence P/O MACUS was 1/c/ The money side, and also had names of secret agents in town.

Source, Major HAAS, Capt. STAVELY (USAAF) and F/O EGGLES (RAF) were also on the Escape Committee.

2. Source had instructions for inter-camp communications, but never had to write any messages.

3. Nil.

4. All parcels to prisoners of war had to be opened in the presence of a ROUMANIAN officer. No other search was carried out.

Prisoners of war were casually searched on arrival in camp.

HEADQUARTERS
FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520, U. S. Army

D- -hrf

3 September 1944

Conditions in Prisoner of War Hospital in BUCHAREST.

Until June 1944, the only POW hospital in BUCHAREST was a small four-room building in the Enlisted Men's camp, run by an American officer and three sergeants.

The conditions in this hospital, in which there were thirty enlisted men and ten officers, were very bad. The patients had to sleep on wooden bed boards with only a very poor straw mattress and one sheet which was changed about once a month.

There was no Roumanian staff attached to the hospital so that all the work of nursing and keeping the building clean had to be done by the three sergeants.

There was plenty of water in the building but no soap was issued by the camp authorities. A collection had to be made in the main camp so that soap could be bought in the town, and no towels or other cleaning materials were available.

There were only two latrines in the building and one of these was out of action most of the time. They were of the squat type and absolutely inadequate for the number of patients.

There was no lighting system laid on in the building but fortunately the building was in use as a hospital during the summer months so this was no great hardship.

The rooms under normal circumstances would have been quite well ventilated but with the overcrowding and the smell from neglected wounds, the atmosphere was unbearable.

Food for the patients had to be carried from the Main Camp cookhouse and was very poor in quality, consisting mainly of weak vegetable soup for lunch and dinner, weak tea or coffee and a piece of bread for breakfast.

The officer patients got slightly better food as the POW's were fed under the same system as the Roumanian Army where the O R's get maize porridge, soup and black bread while the officers have meat, etc.

No special diets were available for POW's suffering from jaundice, ulcers or stomach troubles although milk was sometimes issued.

No Red Cross parcels were received and only one visit was paid by the Red Cross representative during the three months prior to May. The patients were, however, visited frequently by a woman member of the Roumanian Blue Cross organization.

Conditions in Prisoner of War Hospital in Bucharest (Continued)

There was no dressing room or operating theatre in the hospital. Any patients requiring treatment or an operation were carried on a stretcher through the streets to another hospital about three-fourths of a mile away, and after the treatment or operation they were carried back immediately.

The main trouble seemed to be a complete lack of interest on the part of the Roumanian authorities as medical stores appeared to be available when enough fuss was made. Clean bandages were produced and occasionally SULFA drugs were used, their efficiency was, however, impaired somewhat by the length of time wounds were left without the dressing being changed. This was sometimes fifteen days.

There were no books or games provided by the Roumanians. Any that were in the hospital were provided by the lady from the Blue Cross.

In June 1944, the patients were all moved to a new two-story building. This building was not completed but was already being used as a hospital by the Roumanians. The POW's were given half the top story, the other half being occupied by Roumanians suffering from VD in its various stages.

However, conditions were a slight improvement on the previous building as the POW's had proper spring hospital beds. They still had only one sheet per bed and this had to be washed frequently by the POW staff as sheets were only changed by the Roumanian staff once a month.

The food in the new building was the same as before. In fact it came from the same cookhouse in the Enlisted Men's camp.

A Roumanian nurse volunteered to assist the three sergeants in their task of running the hospital so that patients got a little better treatment and their dressings were changed more frequently.

There was still no dressing room or operating theatre in the building so the patients were once more carried through the streets to the other hospital.

Medical stores varied in quantity a great deal. There was plenty of iodine to be had, in fact it was used for every disinfecting job possible, but SULFA drugs were very scarce and that which was used, the POW's are sure came from the Airmen's escape kit.

Washing facilities were poor. There was only one sink for the use of all the POW's although there was always plenty of water.

The latrines were filthy as they were shared with the Roumanians who didn't seem at all particular about that sort of thing.

Again the POW's were up against a lack of interest on the part of the authorities and it was noticed that this was also true in their attitude towards their own patients. To get anything done at all it was necessary for the POW staff to argue for long periods and their follow-up after consent was given otherwise nothing would be carried through.

Conditions in Prisoner of War Hospital in Bucharest (continued)

One POW with seven A.S.W. had his arm and part of his body in a plaster cast with access to only one wound. Naturally, the remainder went bad so that he contracted lock-jaw. He was taken away and cured of that but died a few days after his return with no attempt being made to remove the plaster cast.

Another patient during the amputation of his leg, this operation in itself was caused by lack of proper treatment, was having fluid pumped into his system. Through carelessness air was allowed in so that the patient began to swell at all the weak points of his arteries and died shortly afterwards.

It appears on the whole that the Roumanian medical authorities in the POW hospital at BUCHAREST were both incompetent and disinterested in the care of the American POW patients.

A-2 Section

HEADQUARTERS
MEDITERRANEAN ALLIED AIR FORCESMEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN REGARD TO AIR FORCE
PERSONNEL EVACUATED FROM ROUMANIA BY AIR

Information regarding the evacuation from Roumania by air of sick and wounded Air Force personnel, as well as regarding the medical care which they had received while in that country, was obtained by interviews with several of the officers of the Fifteenth Air Force, who took part in that operation, and with a number of these patients and their attending Medical Officers in the 26th General Hospital, Bari. The operational procedure for the evacuation was described by Colonel GEORGE W. KRAIGER, who headed the mission in Roumania. Details in regard to the medical phases of the evacuation were obtained from Colonel OTIS O. BENSON, JR., Surgeon of the Fifteenth Air Force, and Lt. Col. W. R. LOVELACE, of the Aero-Medical Laboratory, Wright Field, both of whom took part in the operation. Lt. Col. CLARENCE C. PEARSON, Assistant Surgeon of the Fifteenth Air Force, who was active in the planning of the medical phases of the operation and in the conversion of the two B-17's used as ambulance planes, was also interviewed at length.

From these sources, the following information was obtained: On 30 August 1944, the day after his arrival in Bucharest, Col. KRAIGER visited the building to which the American patients had been transferred, from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in the city. A temporary ward had been set up in this building and the patients transported there at the instigation of the Americans, themselves, in order to lessen their exposure to German bombing, which followed Roumania's declaration of war on Germany. Her Col. KRAIGER found 39 bed and 12 ambulatory cases with about 60 enlisted men in attendance. He notified them of the evacuation planned for the following day.

On the morning of the 31st of August, Major RAYMOND BEAL, Surgeon of the 2d Bomb Group, and Lt. Col. W. R. LOVELACE of the Aero-Medical Laboratory, Wright Field, arrived with the first flight of Fortresses, which landed at 1000 hours at Popesti Airfield, a few miles outside of Bucharest. They proceeded immediately to the building where the American patients were awaiting them. Here, using medical supplies which they had brought with them, Major BEAL hastily prepared the patients for the journey, while Lt. Col. LOVELACE undertook the difficult job of arranging transportation to the Airfield. As the patients had received practically no attention from the Roumanian Medical Officers during the disruption of the city services in the three days of constant German bombing, Major BEAL's job was one of considerable difficulty. His time was limited by the necessity of transporting the patients to the Airfield in time to meet the last flight of Fortresses, which, in turn, had to make a rendezvous with their fighter escort. Preparations, however, were completed so that ten litter and 29 ambulatory cases were transported to the Airfield in time to make this connection.

"Medical Considerations in Regard to Air
Force Personnel evacuated from Roumania
by Air" (Cont'd.)

Two Fortresses prepared to carry six litter cases each, by means of litter racks fixed in the bomb bays, landed at Potesti Airfield with the last of the three flights of the day. Colonel BENSON was in attendance in one of these "ambulance" planes, while Captain VOIGT, Surgeon of the 807th Medical Air Evacuation Transport Squadron, accompanied the other. Six of the litter cases were loaded into one of these planes and four in the other, while the ambulatory cases were distributed between them. The planes departed at 14.30 hours and landed at Bari at 17.45 hours, after an uneventful return trip. The patients were transported, immediately, by ambulance, to the 26th General Hospital.

The following day the twelve remaining less severe cases, who had been living at the hospital, were evacuated without incident, as were the 60 enlisted men, who had been acting as hospital attendants.

In addition to the cases already mentioned, 41 other evacuees, upon their return, were admitted to the 26th General Hospital on 31 August 1944 for observation and treatment of relatively minor conditions. A complete roster of all of these cases is attached.

In regard to medical care received by American prisoners while in Roumania, two phases of the subject were investigated (a) the general level of medical care in the country and (b) the possibility of discrimination against American airmen in the rendering of medical services. A detailed statistical study on this subject could not be made because, at the time of the investigation, many of these patients were no longer under treatment at the 26th General Hospital, which rightly either discharged them or began their evacuation to the Zone of Interior as soon as possible. However, the opinions expressed were, for the most part, uniform and it was possible to reach a number of well grounded conclusions.

All the patients interviewed observed that the general standard of the medical care which they received in Roumania was much lower than that to which they have become accustomed in the United States. They noticed that the doctors, in general, did not appear to be well trained, although there were, of course, some exceptions to this observation. The nursing care was poor and there was a great scarcity of all types of medical supplies and equipment. Sulfa drugs were unobtainable and the supplies of morphine were limited. On the other hand, those patients who received medical attention from the Germans before being released to the Roumanians observed that their equipment was good and their medical supplies ample. This caused some bitterness on the part of the Roumanian medical officers, who complained that while the Germans had ample medical supplies, they would not release these materials to the Roumanians.

The low general standard of medical proficiency reported by our airmen is confirmed by a review of the hospitalized cases. The statements of the patients, that amputations of the extremities were performed at the slightest provocation, are supported by the large number of such cases among our evacuees. This is partly explained by the fear of infection,

"Medical Considerations in Regard to Air
Force Personnel Evacuated from Roumania
by Air" (Cont'd.)

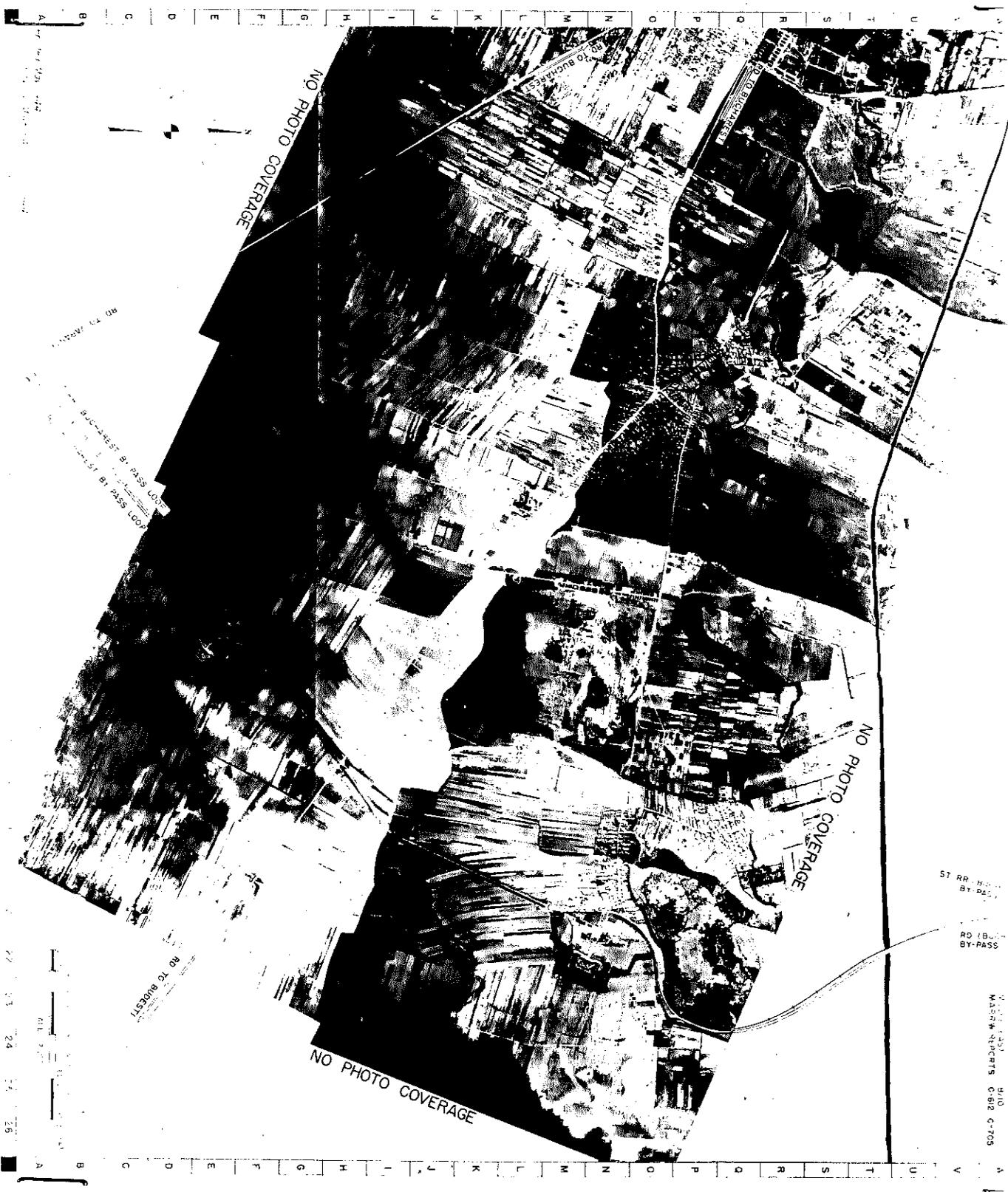
on the part of the Roumanian doctors, a fear somewhat justified because of the lack of drugs. This, however, would not explain some of the amputations which appeared to result from their policy "when in doubt, amputate". Examination of X-ray films brought back by Lt. Col. LOVELACE tends to confirm the impression that the orthopedic work, in general, was not of a high standard.

During the time many of the evacuees were prisoners of war, an outbreak of diphtheria occurred in the area in which they were located. The treatment used in the high number of cases of neuritis following these attacks is of interest. The large number of injections which the patients received leads one to believe that a preparation of very low potency must have been used. It is believed by the Medical Officers who examined these cases in the 26th General Hospital that as high as 90% of the cases of diphtheria were followed by a typical post diphtheritic neuritic syndrome. The explanation of this high percentage of complications is not clear. Deficient diet would appear to be a factor but one case, who contracted the disease one week after his capture, also developed this complication. The time element in this case would not appear to be sufficient to account for the neuritis on the basis of dietary deficiency. Further efforts are being made by the office of the Surgeon, Fifteenth Air Force, to gather additional material on this subject.

In general, the food in the hospitals was poor, consisting much of the time in soup and black bread. Vegetables were occasionally obtained but meat was rarely served. Sanitary conditions were also far from satisfactory.

Interviews with the evacuated patients did not reveal any evidence of organized discrimination against the Americans. Conditions were generally bad but, in most instances, our fliers reported that the situation was as unsatisfactory for the Roumanian patients as for the Americans. The limited supply of drugs, in most instances, was used for the cases which needed treatment most, regardless of nationality.

R. B. NELSON
Lt. Col, M.C.



NO PHOTO COVERAGE

NO PHOTO COVERAGE

NO PHOTO COVERAGE

ST RR - HOUSTON BY-PASS

RD 16 BURESTI
RD 15 BURESTI
RD 14 BURESTI
RD 13 BURESTI
RD 12 BURESTI
RD 11 BURESTI
RD 10 BURESTI
RD 9 BURESTI
RD 8 BURESTI
RD 7 BURESTI
RD 6 BURESTI
RD 5 BURESTI
RD 4 BURESTI
RD 3 BURESTI
RD 2 BURESTI
RD 1 BURESTI

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26
MILES

MISCELLANEOUS DATA ON PERSONALITIES,
ANECDOTES, ETC.

#1 The Prisoner of War camps that housed American personnel were located as follows: The Camp at Tinisul de Jose, which is 12 Kilometers south of the city of Brasov, was made up mostly of men from the Floesti raid of 1 August 1943. This consisted of 39 officers and 71 enlisted men. During this period many of this group were hospitalized and were put in military hospital 415 in Siniai which is 45 kilometers south of Brasov. Other personnel - both officers and enlisted men - were kept in the military garrison next to the sports arena in Bucharest until 8 May 1944. This personnel was then taken to two different camps; the enlisted men in the military hospital near the north station in Bucharest, and the officers in Scoala Normala Caterina in south central section of Bucharest (telephone number: 33496). They were kept here from 8 May 60 23 August when they were transported to the garrison near Bragadiru, 8 kilometers SSW of Bucharest. They were kept here from 23 August until they were evacuated. The Dutch Admiral, Dorman, who was flown out with the evacuees, did much to consolidate the plans for the evacuation and was responsible for transportation and the movements of the personnel out of the Prisoner of War camps to the garrison, as at least one of the camps was located in the direct line of retreat of the Germans and it was felt to be necessary to move the personnel so that they would not be taken along to Germany.

Admiral Dorman did much for the comfort of our airmen, in many ways. He spoke the Rumanian language fluently and knew the provisions of the Geneva Conference by heart. He stood up for the rights of the prisoners very forcefully on all occasions and worked with the Commanding General of the Fifth Corps territory to complete the arrangements of the transportation of this personnel. The 39 officers and 71 enlisted men at camp Tinisul de Jos were transported from there to Pietro Sita. They arrived at Pietro Sita at 11:30 at night and were hidden in the homes of the Rumanian population in that city. Arrangements had been worked out prior to their arrival through the efforts of Admiral Dorman and the personnel was taken one or two at a time to the different homes where they were all treated excellently. The trip from camp was quite a harrowing experience for the American airmen inasmuch as they ran into the German Army leaving Rumania as they were being transported from the camp. They pulled the trucks off the side of the road and all stood in readiness to fight for their lives, if necessary. However, the German Army rolled by without stopping. Further, Admiral Dorman had arranged for guns and ammunition for all the prisoners which were stored in a small arsenal near the camp and if it had become necessary, at a given signal all were going to draw these guns and ammunition to protect themselves against either being shot or evacuated into Germany along with the German Army.

X X X X X X

#2 Major Bean, of the 461st Bombardment Group, who was downed on 5 April in a raid on Floesti, further showed great initiative and daring in his efforts to aid the men and get

them moved out of the danger zone at the time of the capitulation. He stole a Rumanian pistol and hitch-hiked to Bucharest, went to the highest authorities, and demanded aid in setting up transportation and allowing the men to leave the camp. After much persuasion, his plan was accomplished and he was given Marshal Antonescu's personal car and for three days drove around Rumania in it with a chauffeur coordinating these plans.

x x x x x x

#3 It is pointed out that of all the people in Bucharest that helped the American prisoners of war, the one who did the most and who made life bearable for them in the prison camps was a lady by the name of Ecaterina Caragea, whose address is 129 Calea Victoria, Bucharest. She runs an orphan house for refugees. She visited the camps weekly, took athletic equipment, food, etc., to the men. Being well known and, apparently, feared by certain Rumanian officials, she was able to obtain shoes for the men when it was impossible to get them from other sources, straighten out their mail difficulties, and it was pointed out by a large number of the evacuated airmen that her efforts alone did more for their morale than any other one thing.

COPY

HEADQUARTERS
MEDITERRANEAN ALLIED AIR FORCES

MEMORANDUM

TO : Lt. Col. Parton

Approximately 150,000 words were filed by correspondents on "Operation Reunion," a greater wordage total than filed for any other event in this theater.

Seven correspondents flew into Rumania with Fortress group and obtained first-hand stories on the operation.

Newsreel movies were taken by 1st CCU (Combat Camera Unit), with sound; four still photos were radiod to the States, and 35 to 40 still photos are being sent on #1 Priority to Washington for distribution.

Six evacuated airmen were flown to Rome for interviews by correspondents there; all were put on live radio broadcasts back to the States. Army Hour, at our suggestion, revised its schedule at last minute, to include broadcast by Col. Gunn and Major Yeager, the two leaders of the interned airmen.

Lt. I. H. Fox, one of the evacuated airmen, wrote a series of six articles for MAAF PRO describing various aspects of life in the Bucharest prison camp, the entry of Russian troops into the city, etc. These were given correspondents in Rome and wide use was made of them.

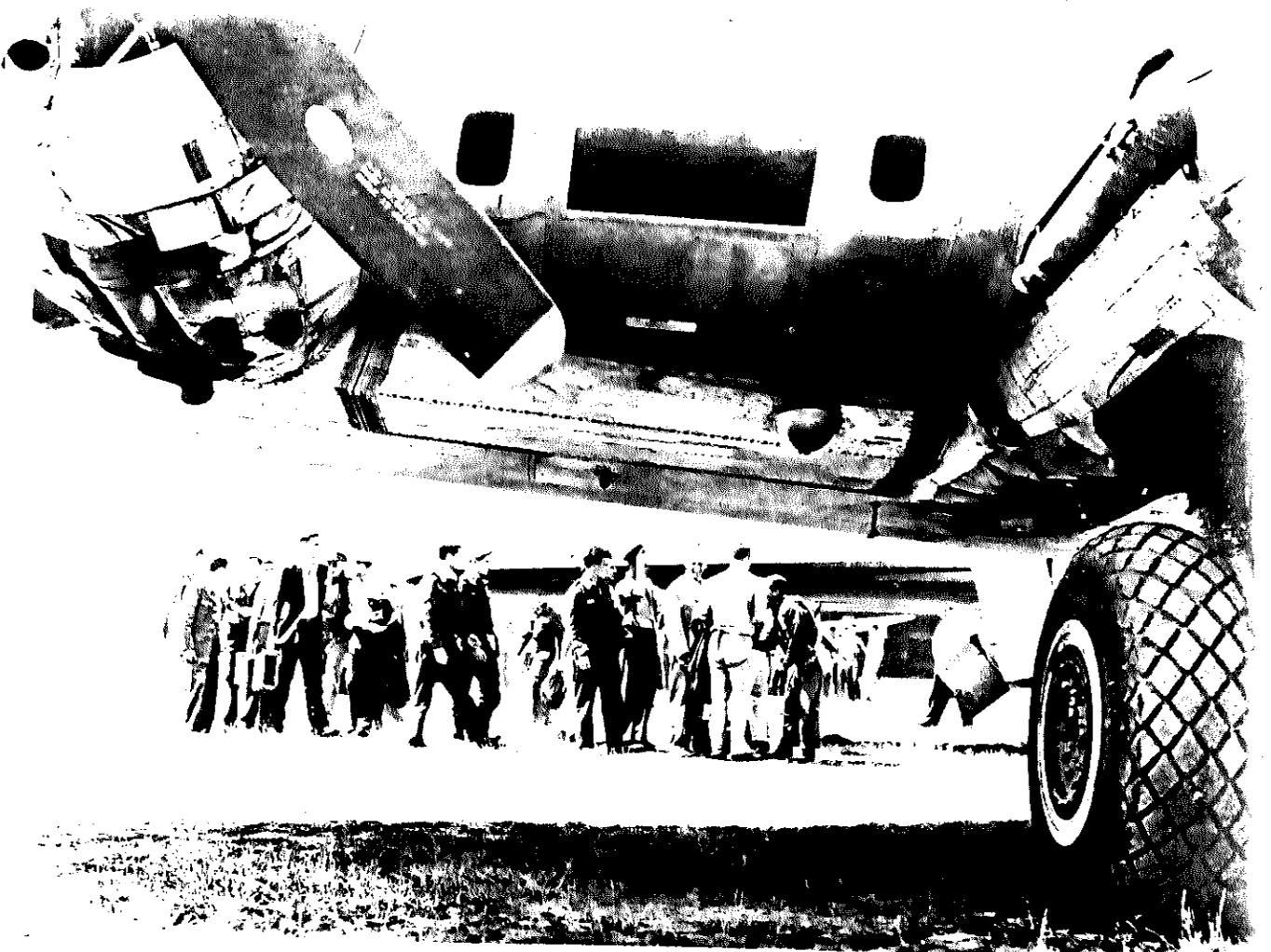
A number of correspondents, including INS for American Weekly, have written articles in series form for publication in the States.

Copies of MAAF PRO releases to correspondents are attached.

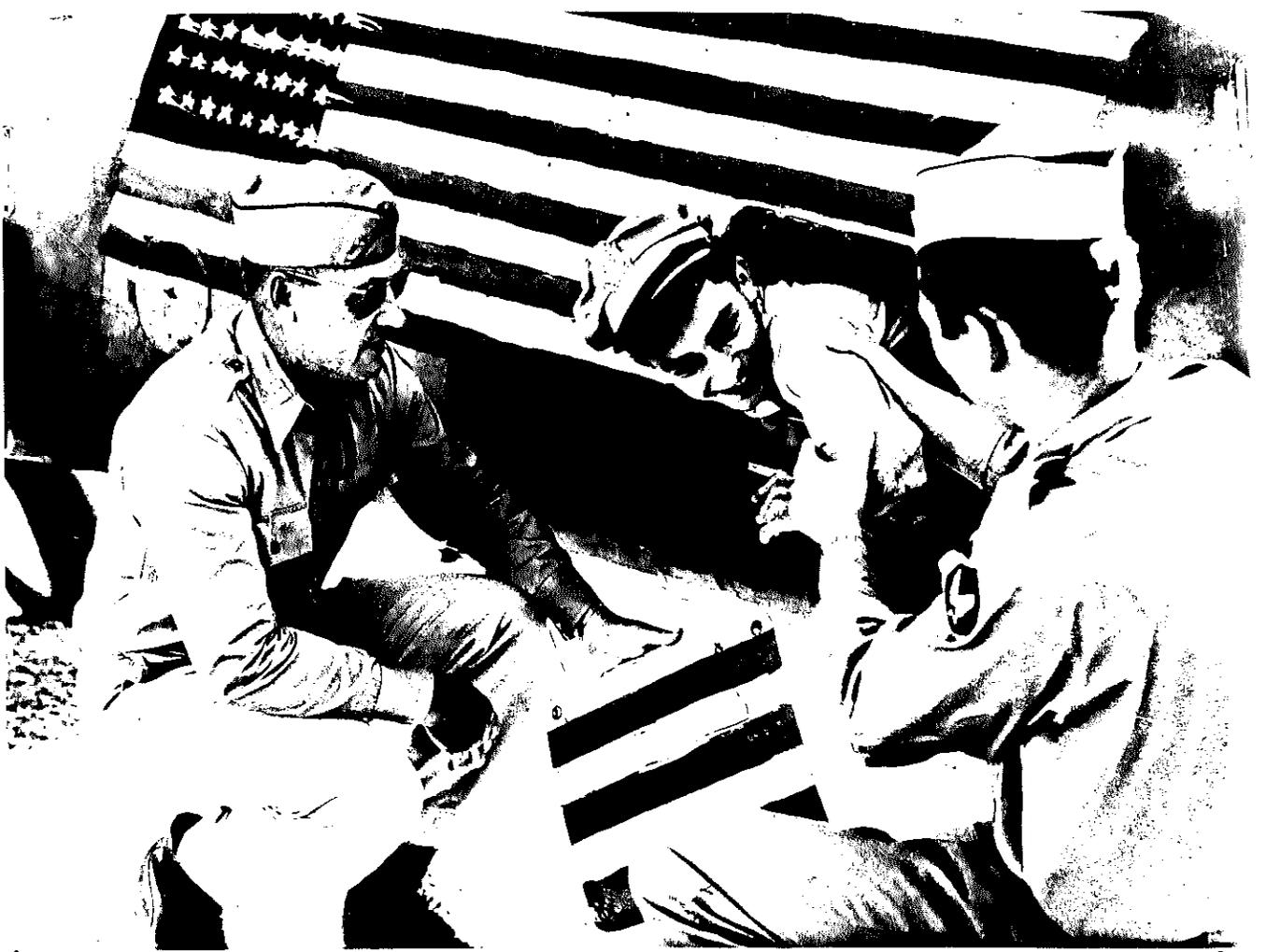
GORDON H. TURRENTINE,
Major, Air Corps,
Asst PRO (News Section).

91523

Popeati Airfield -- loading up



This photo taken where Col. Nurse reads - below.
(note - officer in center is not shown)



91534







Gen. Twining meeting evacuees - above.

Gen. Twining addresses them - below.





Bari -- unloading a litter case.





De-loading



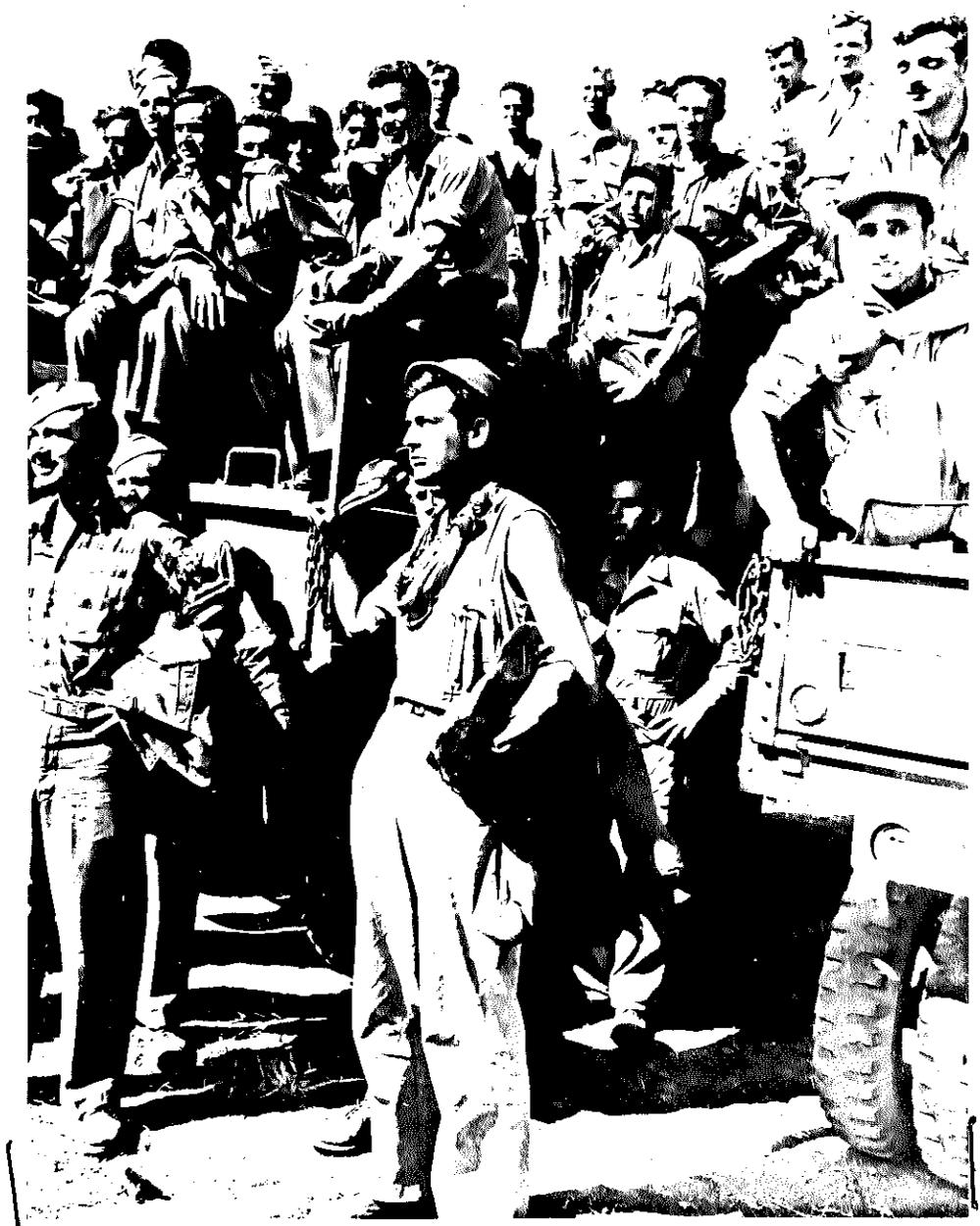


Lt. Robert Blakelee, bombardier, Chicago.
Lt. William Bristoe, pilot, Baltimore.
Lt. William Bantly, pilot, Jamesville, Miss.





Lt. Eugene F. Hagenson, Canton, Texas
Holding a Roumanian helmet.





S/Sgt. Eddy Laver, Lanchester, Ohio

