

RESTRICTED

WAR DEPARTMENT  
HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES  
WASHINGTON

MACR No. 6526

COPY

## MISSING AIR CREW REPORT

IMPORTANT: This report will be compiled in triplicate by each Army Air Forces organization within 48 hours of the time an aircraft is officially reported missing.

- ORGANIZATION: Location: APC 719 Command or Air Force III Bomber  
GROUP 307th ; SQUADRON 371st ; DETACHMENT
- SPECIFY: Point of Departure Mokorang A/D ; Course 141° (TO)  
Intended Destination Mokorang A/D ; Type of Mission Combat
- WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED  
Good: 4/10 Scattered cumulus
- GIVE: (a) Date 7/5/44 Time 0900 K ; Location of Last known whereabouts of missing aircraft 7°15' N-139°55' E  
(b) Specify whether (X) Last sighted; ( ) Last contacted by radio;  
(X) Forced down; (X) Seen to Crash; or ( ) Information not available
- AIRCRAFT WAS LOST, OR IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN LOST, AS A RESULT OF (Check only one: (X) Enemy Aircraft; ( ) Enemy Anti-Aircraft; ( ) Other Circumstances as follows
- AIRCRAFT: Type, Model and Series B-24J ; AAF Serial No. 44-40611
- ENGINES: Type, Model and Series R-1830-65A ; AAF Serial No. (a) BP443211  
(b) BP441464 (c) BP440287 (d) BP443229
- INSTALL WEAPONS (Furnish below Make, Type and Serial Number)  
(a) 8 fixed & 2 flexible Browning Cal 50 (c) M2 machine guns (d) Ser. Nos.  
(e) 2 flexible Browning Cal 30 M2 (g) Machine guns (h) not available
- THE PERSONS LISTED BELOW WERE REPORTED AS: (a) Battle Casualty X  
or (b) Non-Battle Casualty
- NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew 11 Passengers 0 Total 11  
(Starting with pilot, furnish the following particulars: If more than 11 persons were aboard aircraft, list similar particulars on separate sheet and attach original to this form).

Crew Position	Name in Full (Last name First)	Rank	Serial Number	Status
1. Pilot	Rice, Edward J.	1st Lt	0-683585	DED
2. Co-Pilot	Smith, Kenneth D.	1st Lt	0-691003	DED
3. Navigator	Bilder, Marcel J.	1st Lt	0-743560	DED
4. Bombardier	Brown, Lester P. Jr.	1st Lt	0-751880	DED
5. Engineer	Tampio, Benjamin T.	T/Sgt	16022254	DED
6. Asst Eng	Stein, Sol	S/Sgt	12181798	DED
7. Radio Opr	Silko, Thomas B.	T/Sgt	13038632	DED
8. ASST Rad Opr	Reed, Donald E.	S/Sgt	35740776	DED
9. Gunner	Manfredi, Sam H.	S/Sgt	36615401	DED
10. Armorer-gun	Painter, Earle W.	S/Sgt	13119229	DED
11. Rad Opr	Griggs, Tommy W.	T/Sgt	38228054	DED

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12. IDENTIFY, BELOW THOSE PERSONS WHO ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE LAST KNOWLEDGE OF AIRCRAFT, AND CHECK APPROPRIATE COLUMN TO INDICATE BASIS FOR SAME:

Name in Full (Last name first)	Rank	Serial Number	Contacted by Radio	Last Sighted	Saw Crash	Saw Forced Landing
Johnson, Howard B.	2nd Lt.	0-77213			X	
Love, Melvin L.	1st Lt.	0-746506			X	

13. IF PERSONNEL ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE SURVIVED, ANSWER TO YES TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS: (a) Parachutes were used: yes; (b) Persons were seen walking away from scene of crash none; or (c) Any other reason (Specify)

14. ATTACH AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH, MAP, CHART, OR SKETCH, SHOWING APPROXIMATE LOCATION WHERE AIRCRAFT WAS LAST SEEN.

15. ATTACH EYEWITNESS DESCRIPTION OF CRASH, FORCED LANDING, OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES PERTAINING TO MISSING AIRCRAFT. See attached.

16. ATTACH A DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTENT OF SEARCH, IF ANY, AND GIVEN NAME, RANK AND SERIAL NUMBER OF OFFICER IN CHARGE HERE Captain Eugene J. Cranen, 0-740072

Date of Report 6 July 1944

HAROLD A. TWIST, JR.

(Signature, Air Corps, Adjutant)  
Adjutant

\* Extra Radio Operator

371st BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF  
Office of the Intelligence Officer

AFPO 7719  
9 July 1944.

SUBJECT: Statement of Lt. Melvin L. Love, pertaining to  
Crash of Aircraft No. 44-40611.

TO: Operations, Headquarters, 307th Bomb. Group, (H).

1. The following is an account of the circumstances surrounding  
the crash of Aircraft No. 44-40611, piloted by Lt. Edward J. Rice:

"About 15 minutes after interception started I saw Lt. Rice feather his #1 engine. This operation was repeated several times as the prop unfeathered by itself necessitating feathering it again. When the interceptors saw his difficulty they immediately left the rest of the planes and concentrated on Lt. Rice's ship, making pass after pass. After interception had left us I saw #3 engine starting to smoke. All this time he was leading the formation, keeping away from the cumulus clouds to enable the formation to stay together. I was flying slightly to his right and about 2,000 feet above him. It was about this time that I heard him call Lt. Johnson over the VHF and say that he was going to have to ditch the plane. I saw the chutes of four men who had bailed out. I saw the last chute open after the plane fell off on its left wing, with fire visible at #3 engine. Apparently at this time the pilot and co-pilot had left the controls to bail out. I then saw the ship hit the water and explode on impact. I saw Lt. Johnson and a ship from the 424th Squadron circling the men in the water and I continued on to Base with the formation

MELVIN L. LOVE,  
1st Lt., Air Corps,  
Pilot

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AFC #719  
6 July 1944

SUBJECT: Description of Crash of Aircraft No. 44-40611

TO: Operations, Headquarters, 307th Bombardment Group, (H).

1. Following is an extract from the Intelligence Report of 5 July 1944, describing the circumstances surrounding the crash of Aircraft No. 44-40611 as related by Lt. Howard D. Johnson, pilot of Aircraft No. 1092, flying cover for Aircraft No. 44-40611:

"One B-24 was lost today. About 15 minutes after the fight started, Lt. Rice, flying A/C #0611, was forced to feather #1 engine, which is believed to have been hit by a 20 mm. shell. He apparently had considerable difficulty in this, as the operation had to be repeated several times. The attacking fighters, seeing his difficulty, immediately concentrated on him and made pass after pass. A little later #3 engine commenced to smoke. The formation was staying with him all the time, losing altitude and dropping to an IAS of 140 M.P.H. After the Dekes left, Lt. Rice was still losing altitude and flying speed. His ship was smoking at the right wing root and flames appeared at this spot. At about this time he told Lt. Johnson over VHF that he was going to have to make a water landing. It was now evident that the fire was getting out of control. He started a series of fairly steep dives and pullouts. After the third pull out, five men were seen to bail out at 2500 feet, 3 through the camera hatch and 2 through the bomb bays. The plane then slid steeply on its left wing, indicating that the pilot and co-pilot had left the controls and were preparing to jump. Fire was all over the ship by this time, beginning at the right wing root and coming out of waist windows. The plane crashed into the water, and exploded violently on impact.

All 5 chutes were seen to open. Lt. Johnson, in A/C #092, circled the area for 25 minutes. All 5 men were seen swimming in the water, 3 fairly close together in one group and two rather separated. A 5 man life raft was tossed out and one of the men was seen swimming toward it. There was also a plane from 424th Squadron circling the area, and it also dropped a life raft. In addition, another life raft was observed in the area, believed to have been released from Lt. Rice's plane. The closest survivor to any raft was no nearer than 300 yards of it. It is extremely doubtful if any of the 6 men not seen to bail out survived the crash.

PHILIP D. THOMPSON,  
1st Lt., Air Corps,  
Intelligence Officer.

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