

HEADQUARTERS
AMERICAN GRAVES REGISTRATION SERVICE AREA COMMAND
PACIFIC THEATER
WHC/hma*

missin' air crew

BK.

APO 707
24 Sep 46 ✓
S: 24 Jan 46

GSQMM 293

SUBJECT: Request for Discontinuance of Active Search

TO : Quartermaster General, Washington 25, D.C.

1. Attention is invited to inclosed correspondence.
2. Statements of eye witnesses indicate the B-24J, AAF Serial No. 42-110139 crashed into the water close to Yap Island on 23 June 1944.
3. The status of all crew members has been changed from MIA to KIA.
4. In view of the above and the fact that there is no known land area where a concentrated search can be made, it is requested that this headquarters be authorized to discontinue active search for the remains of the following:

| | | |
|-------------------------|---------|----------|
| BOLTON, William M. | 2nd Lt. | 0-750934 |
| CHRISTIANSEN, Wesley D. | 2nd Lt. | 0-760784 |
| MOSSBURG, Louis G. | 2nd Lt. | 0-701266 |
| REILLY, William L. Jr | 2nd Lt. | 0-701646 |
| JONES, Earl F. | S/Sgt | 6945349 |
| TROTTER, James W. | S/Sgt | 18139039 |
| BIGLEY, Norbert | T/Sgt | 36645810 |
| LERNER, Hyman | S/Sgt | 12184873 |
| BARROW, Herbert T. | S/Sgt | 34765871 |
| SATTERFIELD, Luther S. | S/Sgt | 34607882 |

5. Copies of this correspondence are retained in the files of this headquarters for future reference.

Lee M. Hester
LEE M. HESTER
Colonel, OMC
Commanding

- 2 Incls:
Incl #1 - Ltr Hq AFWESPAC, file GSQMM 704.5,
subj: Cas Info, dtd 6 May 46, w/1st Ind.
Incl #2 - Statements of seven crew members,
dtd 24 June 44

293 - Graves Registration (Pacific)

*fill w/ Krauss
Nat*

RECORDED
INDEXED

2349

Ltr, Hq, USAF, WESPAC, APO 707, GSQMM 704.5, Subj: Casualty Information,
6 May 46

MPYQM 293 (6 May 46)

1st Ind

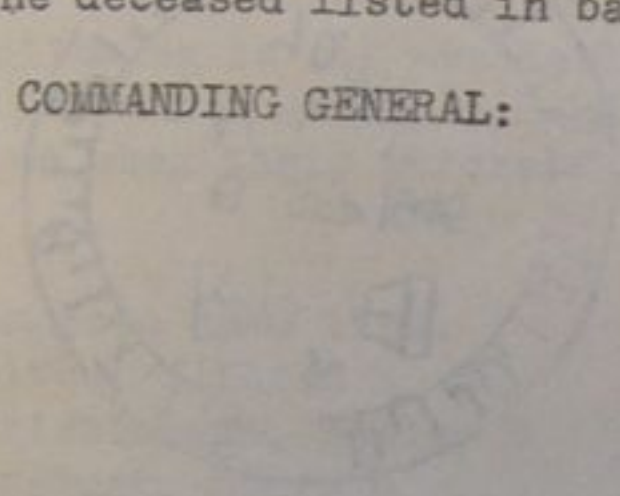
Headquarters United States Army Forces, Middle Pacific, APO 958 27 AUG 1946

TO: Commanding General, United States Army Forces, Western Pacific
APO 707

ATTENTION: Quartermaster (Gen Gr Rec Br)

Search of records in this headquarters reveals no information per-
taining to the deceased listed in basic communication.

FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL:


H. S. Thatcher
H. S. THATCHER
Lt Col, AGD
Asst Adj Gen

261580

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Authority NND 785095

By KS NARA Date 10/30/08

Qm

HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES WESTERN PACIFIC
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL

AP0 707
S: 1 July 46
6 MAY 1946

GSQMM 704.5

SUBJECT: Casualty Information

TO : Commanding General, United States Army Forces, Middle Pacific, APO 958
Attn: Memorial Branch

1. Following is all available information at this headquarters relative to personnel aboard a B-24J, AAF Serial No. 42-110139, missing 25 June 44 when their aircraft crashed in water close to Yap Island.

(a) Complete crew list.

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------|----------|
| ✓ Bolton, William M | 2nd Lt | 0-750934 |
| ✓ Christiansen, Wesley D | 2nd Lt | 0-760784 |
| ✓ Mossburg, Louis G | 2nd Lt | 0-701266 |
| ✓ Reilly, William L Jr | 2nd Lt | 0-701646 |
| ✓ Jones, Earl F | S/Sgt | 6945349 |
| ✓ Trotter, James W | S/Sgt | 18139039 |
| ✓ Bigley, Norbert | T/Sgt | 36645810 |
| ✓ Lerner, Hyman | S/Sgt | 12184873 |
| ✓ Barrow, Herbert T | S/Sgt | 34765871 |
| ✓ Satterfield, Luther | S/Sgt | 34607882 |

(b) Signed statements by seven crew members of other planes in the formation state that subject plane made a forced landing in the water close to Yap Island, (09° 34'N) (138° 15'E). Plane developed engine trouble shortly before landing and was made the center of attack by four or five enemy fighters. The plane cracked up in landing and nothing was seen but debris which sank within three minutes. The area of the crash was then strafed by Zeke fighters.

2. Request records your headquarters be reviewed to determine whether subject crew have been interred in a cemetery under your jurisdiction either as knowns or possible unknowns.

FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL:

Frank J. Kleager
FRANK J. KLEAGER
1ST LT. INF (ARMP)
ACTG ASST ADJ GEN.
A646

None retained in AG

704 (Rpt to) (6 May 46)

23RD BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
APO # 324

24 June 1944

S - T - A - T - E - M - E - N - T

Airplane # 139, Purple 2B, was flying slightly above and forward of us on our right. I noticed a burst of flak forward of their right wing as we started our bombing run. On the peel off his # 4 engine was smoking very badly, but he was flying good formation. About two or three minutes from the target he veered to the right. We dropped back to cover him, dropping 10° of flaps and flying at 140 I.A.S. but he was unable to gain on us and was losing altitude fast. I could only see him myself by turning to the right.

I saw at least two Zekes making passes on him. We could hear him on VHF saying he was going to ditch. We were to his left and at 6,500' when he hit the water. I had to stand up and lean over to see him. I didn't see the ship at the instant of impact, but I did see the water splash and the path of the ship thru the water. It seemed to curve to the right in the water. I could see no part of the ship after it hit. Another Squadron of five or six ships had called Purple 2B on VHF saying they would cover them. Being nearly out of ammunition we continued to catch our formation.

SYDNEY M. KRAABEL
2nd Lt., Air Corps,
Pilot

C O P Y

Incl 2

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Authority NND 785095
By KJ NARA Date 10/30/08

C O P Y

23RD BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
APO # 324

23 June 1944

MISSION NUMBER: 102-175-2-13

DATE OF MISSION: 23 June 1944

24 June 1944

S-T-A-T-E-M-E-N-T

Shortly after turning off our Bombing Run Airplane #139 was forced to drop out of our formation with # 4 engine smoking. A few minutes later he began losing altitude and was unable to stay on our wing at 140 MPH (I).

At approximately 1220K he appeared off our right wing very low. At least two (2) Zekes were making repeated passes on him. We were at about 6,800'. The plane appeared to level off slightly above the water when his right wing dropped and hit the water, with the nose hitting next, and then the entire airplane was blocked from view by the spray of water. After the crash there appeared a large yellow blotch on the water. The Zekes made several passes on the spot where the airplane went down. At about this time, two (2) to three (3) minutes after the crash, the scene was blocked from my view by our right wing and I was unable to observe if there were any survivors.

WILLIAM M. JOHNSON
2nd Lt., Air Corps
Co-Pilot

AIR MESSAGE

Arthur J. Finkel
1st Lt., Air Corps
Operations Officer

C O P Y

Incl.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 785095
By KS NARA Date 10/30/08

23 June 1944

MISSION NUMBER: 102-175-B-13

DATE OF MISSION: 23 June 1944

E X T R A C T

ENEMY INTERCEPTIONS: 7-10 Zekes intercepted the formation on the bomb run. One painted silver, one green, the rest dark brown. 6 Phosphorus bombs were dropped on the formation; all missed formation from 300-1,000 yds. Two Zekes dove down through the formation. These Zekes were eager. Passes started from 800-1,000 yds and were in general pressed to 400 yds with 4 coming within 100 yds. From 10-15 passes were made on this Sq's formation. The majority of passes came from the front from 10-2 o'clock low or level. The rest of the passes were all around the clock still either level or low. Plane 139 was soon picked out for attack by 5 Zekes. They made passes at this plane from all directions. This plane was able to stay in formation for about four minutes. #3 engine smoking but not feathered. Plane #245 piloted by Lt. Kraabel, covered plane until he ran out of ammunition. The crippled plane now had #4 engine feathered and was about 1,000(feet) altitude when the plane started losing altitude very rapidly. The plane appeared to attempt to level off for a water landing when the right wing hit and the plane dove into the water, and never came up. There were no wreckage but five Zekes strafed the area that had followed him from target.

For the Squadron Commander:

/s/ Jack Graw
/t/ JACK GRAW
Capt. Air Corps
Intelligence Officer

A T R U E E X T R A C T

/s/ Arthur J. Finnell
/t/ ARTHUR J. FINNELL
1st Lt., Air Corps
Operations Officer

C O P Y

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Authority NND 785095
By KS NARA Date 10/30/08

23RD BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
APO # 324

24 June 1944

S T A T E M E N T

Airplane #453 of the 424th Bomb Sq (H), 307th Bomb Gp (H),
Piloted by 2nd Lt. ROBERT W. HAMILTON, undersigned, observed wreck-
age of Airplane which went down near the Target. Wreckage
consisted of parts of wing, fuselage and scattered debris. Crew
members in rear of Airplane #453 reported seeing a man swimming
towards a life raft. Another raft was dropped to them from an
altitude of 250'.

ROBERT W. HAMILTON
2nd Lt., Air Corps
Pilot, Ap. # 453.

C O P Y

Incl 1

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Authority NND 785095
By KS NARA Date 10/30/08

24 June 1944

S-T-A-T-E-M-E-N-T

No further search is being made for this plane and crew. Rescue Catalina will not go into that area because of distance from base and proximity of YAP Island.

B-24's on strike in that area will not descend to search altitude (1000') because of critical fuel problem.

At time of Lt. Boltin's water landing, Auburn 1A called Submarine "ASPRO" on Channel "D", VHF, giving position of wreckage in terms of distance and bearing from YAP Island. Additional messages, giving position of wreckage, were sent to Submarine from base.

ARTHUR J. FINNELL,
1st Lt., Air Corps
Operations Officer

C O P Y

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 785095

By KS NARA Date 10/30/08

Incl

24 June 1944

S T A T E M E N T

I first noticed Lt. Boltin's ship in difficulty coming off the bombing run when #4 engine was smoking badly. They were flying off our right wing a little ahead of our ship. They continued to maintain that position for two or three minutes with a greyish yellow smoke continuing to stream from # 4 engine. Three or Four of the attacking Zeros noticing his difficulty, made continual passes from low 1 to 5 o'clock on the stricken ship. About that time, Lt. Boltin's ship fell back toward our tail, losing altitude all the while. We had throttled back to 140 MPH in an attempt to cover him, but he dropped back in spite of our efforts. He appeared to take a new heading after moving about 2,000 yards away at 7 o'clock.

Number 3 engine then appeared to emit flames for an instant, and then began to smoke. Number 4 engine by this time was out, and the ship veered off to our right losing altitude rapidly. To the group of 3 or 4 Zeros attacking the crippled ship, two more were joined. They appeared to be attacking low and level between 3 and 9 o'clock. By this time the plane was around three miles away from us about 3 o'clock and very low over the water. Then the right wing dropped sharply and the plane hit the water at what appeared to be about a 10° angle. It spun over on the right wing and disappeared immediately after the nose went under. All I was able to observe was the turbulence of the water. The foam appeared yellowish and similar in color to the smoke of the burning engines. The Zeros continued to strafe the area where the plane hit. I was unable to observe any crew member leave the ship during the descent or after the crash. As we left the scene of the accident, a squadron of B-24's flew across our tail low in the direction of the stricken ship.

DONALD GRAF
S/Sgt, Radio Operator
Ap # 245

C O P Y

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 785095
By KJ NARA Date 10/30/08

24 June 1944

S-T-A-T-E-M-E-N-T

Over the Target Airplane # 139 starting smoking around #3 engine. At this time the plane started to drop back out of formation and our plane dropped back to cover him. We afforded cover until our ammunition was expended and the stricken ship has started to lose altitude. During this time no action could be observed at the waist.

During the descent of the plane we continued to cover him as much as possible until he was only a few thousand feet above the water. He continued to fly at this altitude for about five (5) minutes. During this stage two (2) Zekes kept circling and making passes, coming to within fifty (50) yards of the plane. The only firing from the plane came from the Ball Turret and the Nose Turret. The plane appeared to be making a good water landing when the right wing dropped into a vertical bank and caught the water. The nose hit at about the same time and then there was only a large splash, obstructing the view of the plane. The left wing was vertical to the water and then slid under. There appeared to be a small bit of wreckage.

After the crash the two enemy ships were joined by five (5) more Zekes and all of them proceeded to strafe the water for about five minutes. We then speeded up and rejoined our Squadron Formation.

JAMES R. MAXWELL,
F/O, Air Corps
Navigator

C O P Y

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 785095

By KS NARA Date 10/30/08

Incl