

Sharon C. Edwards

From: Sharon Edwards
Sent: Sunday, June 23, 2002 9:27 PM
To: goose4@cox.net
Cc: Sharon C. Edwards
Subject: FW: Missing In Action

Jimbro,

Remember the fellow who survived 49 missions, and you were amazed at the treasure that he was for me? Hang onto your hat for this next installment.

-----Original Message-----

From: klein_fk-aj [mailto:klein_fk-aj@msn.com]
Sent: Saturday, June 22, 2002 11:50 PM
To: Sharon Edwards
Subject: Re: Missing In Action

Hi Sharon:

I am attaching to this e-mail a listing of those crews members Missing In Action on July 15, 1944 on a mission to Yap Island.

When I did my research for this list I was surprised to learn that only one plane was lost on that mission from the 372nd Bomb Squadron which was the plane your father was on. The only other plane lost on that mission was from the 370th Bomb Squadron.

You mentioned that your father's plane was lost when it had a collision with another plane which apparently was with a plane from the 370th Bomb Squadron. The following is my educated guess of what may caused this mid-air collision.

Except for Anti-Aircraft Fire the Yap Islands were fairly well neutralized for fighter activity by July of 1944. Since there was limited danger of a fighter attack the Squadrons would bomb in trail, that is one Squadron behind the other. The picture I sent you earlier of the Yap Islands showed this type of bombing formation.

The 372nd was probably the lead Squadron on that mission and since your father was on a new crew they were more an likely at the rear of their Squadron. The Squadrons flew in a six plane formation with a lead crew in front and a plane on their left and right wing. The other three planes of the Squadron would fly in the same type of formation but slightly back and lower to miss their prop wash. Your fathers plane had an extra enlisted man on board who was probably a camera man to take pictures of the target and bomb hits.

The 370th plane was probably the lead plane of the trailing Squadron for they had higher ranking crew members most of which had flown many missions. They also had an extra officer on board who was an observer or was training a new Flight Officer (Flt/O) for the mission. From here on it is hard to tell what actually happened, although I have seen many midair collisions generally caused by a damaged plane loosing power and control or bad and turbulent weather blocking the vision of the pilot. Your father's plane if it had lost power could have fallen back from its normal flight position and in combat action or cloudy weather been hit by the lead plane of the trailing squadron.

The above is my best estimate of what may have happened and is an occurrence we all went through on a daily basis. From July 1944 to the end of the war the

6/24/2002

307th Bomb Group continued to grow stronger and would move to a new base every few months. At the next opportunity I'll send you a few combat photos of missions that may be of interest to you. I am currently conversing with six other family members who are seeking information on missing relatives from the 13th Air Force. Our present war seems to be causing more children to be aware of the sacrifice their parents or grand parents went through to bring us to where we are today.

Best Regards,

Frank

6/24/2002