

13569

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Classified by ~~SECRET~~
by S. A. BRADUNAS, Lt. Col., AC
by F. M. MURPHY, Capt., AC
Date 1 MAR 1968

5594

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13. IF PERSONNEL ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE SURVIVED, ANSWER YES TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS: (a) Parachutes were used _____; (b) Persons were seen walking away from scene of crash _____; or (c) Any other reason (Specify) _____
14. ATTACH AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH, MAP, CHART, OR SKETCH, SHOWING APPROXIMATE LOCATION WHERE AIRCRAFT WAS LAST SEEN OR HEARD FROM. **See Attached Chart.**
15. ATTACH EYEWITNESS DESCRIPTION OF CRASH, POINT OF LANDING, OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES PERTAINING TO MISSING AIRCRAFT. **See S-2 Summary Attached.**
16. GIVE NAME, RANK AND SERIAL NUMBER OF OFFICER IN CHARGE OF SEARCH, IF ANY, INCLUDING DESCRIPTION AND INTENT **None.**

Date of Report 25 March 1945.

Joseph G. Robinson
(Signature of Preparing Officer)

JOSEPH G. ROBINSON,
CAPT., AC.

17. REMARKS OR EYEWITNESS STATEMENTS:

See S-2 Summary Attached.

MAY 5 1945



C O N F I D E N T I A L

S-2 SUMMARY OF EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNTS

Instructions: 1. If aircraft returned, only questions 6 and 7 are applicable. 2. Question number 5 not applicable to Fighter Groups. 3. Summary will be prepared in five copies, four of which will be forwarded. 4. Interrogating Officer will sign original and second copy.

GROUP 303rd Bomb Gp. SQ 358th A/C # 43-39160 MISSION DATE 20 March 1945.

FIRST PILOT TAUB, FRANCIS R. 2/Lt. 0-779002 DESTINATION Hamburg, Germany
NAME RANK SER#

1. Position of missing aircraft when last sighted or contacted:

- (a) By coordinates 53°40'-10°20'E
- (b) Approximate altitude 24,000 feet.
- (c) Last noted heading A/C blew up in the air.
- (d) If out of formation, approximate distance from formation 1000 feet below and 3/4 mile behind.

2. Describe enemy opposition (intensity of flak, intensity and method of enemy fighter attack, etc., with particular reference to missing aircraft): Persistent attacks by enemy Me262's on the tail of the A/C in the formation.

3. Description of extent of damage to missing aircraft (including fires, explosions, etc): First pass by Me262 shot off the vertical stabilizer. On second pass the # 3 engine was hit and right wing caught fire. Missing A/C then exploded in the air.

4. If aircraft was out of control describe appearance:

S/Sgt. Schultz reports that the missing A/C exploded in the air after the second pass by E/A. Lt. Boyles last saw the missing A/C with one engine on fire going down into a cloud. It was under attack by six E/A.

(Over)

C O N F I D E N T I A L

5. If distressed aircraft was out of formation was it last seen with escort? Yes If, so, give distinguishing markings of Fighter Group if noted (Group number, color and or fighter aircraft numbers, nicknames, etc.). Fighter escort around formation

6. Number of parachutes seen and description of jumps (approximate altitude, time between jumps, etc.):

None.

7. Any other remarks not covered by above:

It is not believed that there is any substantial conflict between the stories of Sgt. Schultz and Lt. Boyles as the formation was under fighter attacks and they observed missing A/C at different times.

44-8125 - Reporting A/C

43-38554 - Reporting A/C

43-39160 -

Missing A/C.

8. Date of report 25 March 1945.

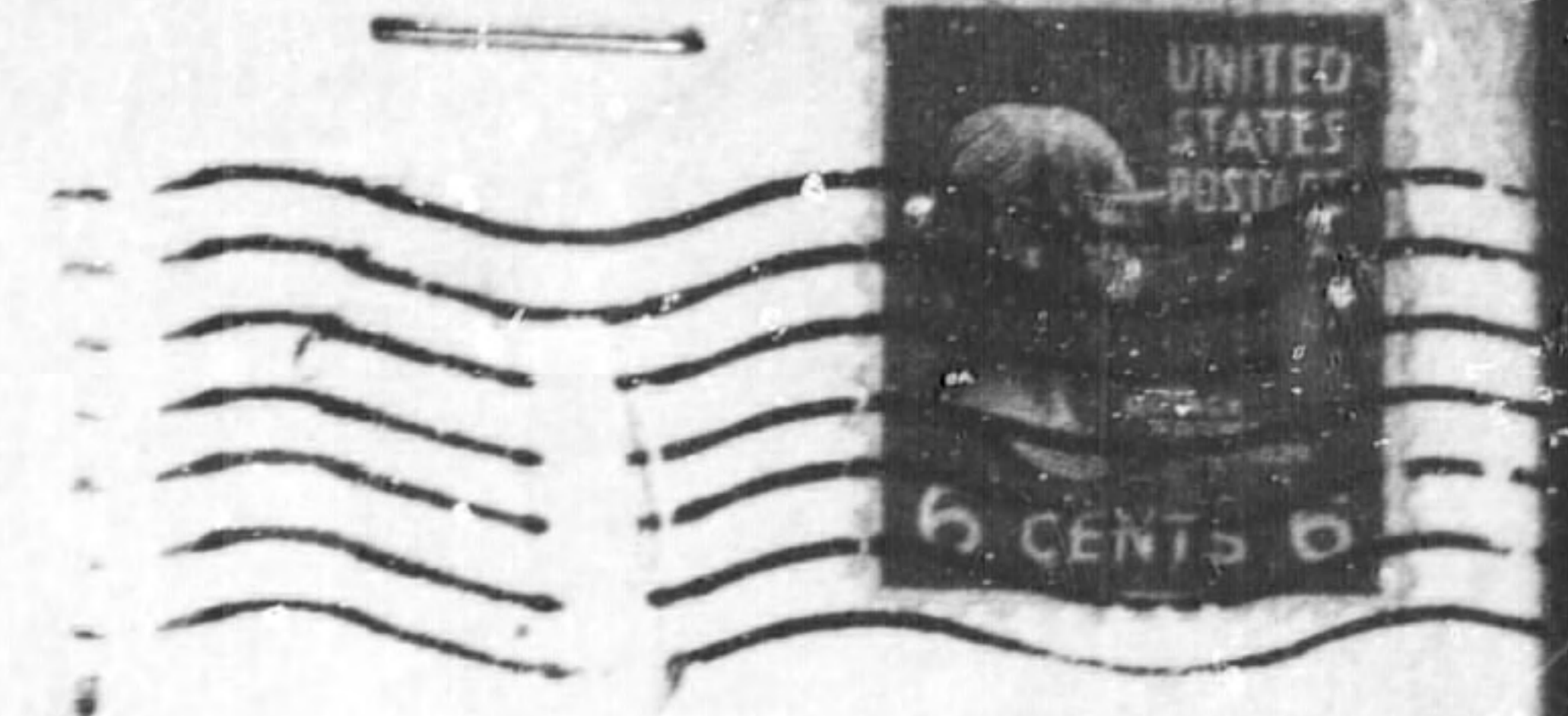
<u>EYE-WITNESSES:</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>SER #</u>	<u>A/C #</u>
1.	Schultz, Frederick W.	S/Sgt.	39566790	43-38554
2.	Boyles, Kenneth L.	2/Lt.	0-780505	44-8125
3.				
4.				

INTERROGATING OFFICER (Sign Original and one copy):

Joseph G. Robinson Capt. 0-904618 Ass't. S-2.
 NAME RANK SER # DUTY
 JOSEPH G. ROBINSON.

NOTE: Supplemental information developing subsequent to this account will be forwarded in manner prescribed in par 6, letter WD, AG, 704 (5 July 44) OB-S-AAF-M, subject "Missing Air Crew Report", 7 July 1944.

Robert ~~A. Gilbert~~ 39138994
1750 Franklin Street
San Francisco, Calif.



Commanding General
Army Air Forces
Washington 25, D. C.

Attention: AFPPA-8

- Copy -

February 7, 1946

Colonel Daniel P. Poteet
Officer in Charge
Status Review and Determination Section
Casualty Branch
War Department
Munitions Building, Room 4601
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Colonel Poteet:

Having received your letter of January 22, 1946 requesting me to forward information concerning the fate of:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>A.S.N.</u>	<u>GRADE</u>
Cooper, John T. Jr.	0929145	2nd Lt.
McWilliams, Elmer D.	39725831	Sgt.

I will do my best to tell you what I know. Of the first man on the list, Cooper, I know absolutely nothing, as I had never so much as met or seen him. This sounds rather strange but, if you are well-informed on the mission that day, you will know that it was what is known as a "Quickie". I had never flown with this particular crew before this time. They were in an altogether different Squadron than myself. Anyway, I can tell you a little about the other fellow, (the Waist Gunner) McWilliams.

We had just turned off the target (Hamburg) and were attacked by two or three ME-262 Jet-propelled fighters. The right wing gas tank was hit and caught fire, whereupon the pilot gave the order to bail out. I followed the radio man to the waist escape hatch which the Ball-turret man was already kicking out. He jumped immediately after the door was clear. All this time the Waist Gunner was standing over to one side back by the tail wheel. The radio man was next in line to jump. He sort of froze in the escape hatch and I shoved him out. I was going to jump right after him, but never got the chance as the plane went into a spin, throwing the Waist Gunner and myself against the side of the plane (away from the escape hatch), pinning us there. The last thing I remember is that the plane straightened up enough for me to move, (at this time McWilliams was about one foot from me) and I headed for the escape hatch. I don't ever remember getting to it, or out of it, as I passed out from lack of oxygen. When I came to, I was floating down with my chute open and I judged from what I saw that the plane had exploded. There were small pieces of metal floating down all around me and my heavy flying pants were split down the back of both legs and it looked as though the concussion might have caused it. That is about all I can tell you about McWilliams. After that last time in the plane, I never saw him again. I saw all the crew members except the Pilot, Co-Pilot and Waist Gunner in prison camp.

- Copy -

-2-

This completes the information which I have to offer you. I realize it isn't much, but there is really not much that I can tell you, as I don't rightly know how I got out myself. Hoping this is of some help to you in your task, I remain

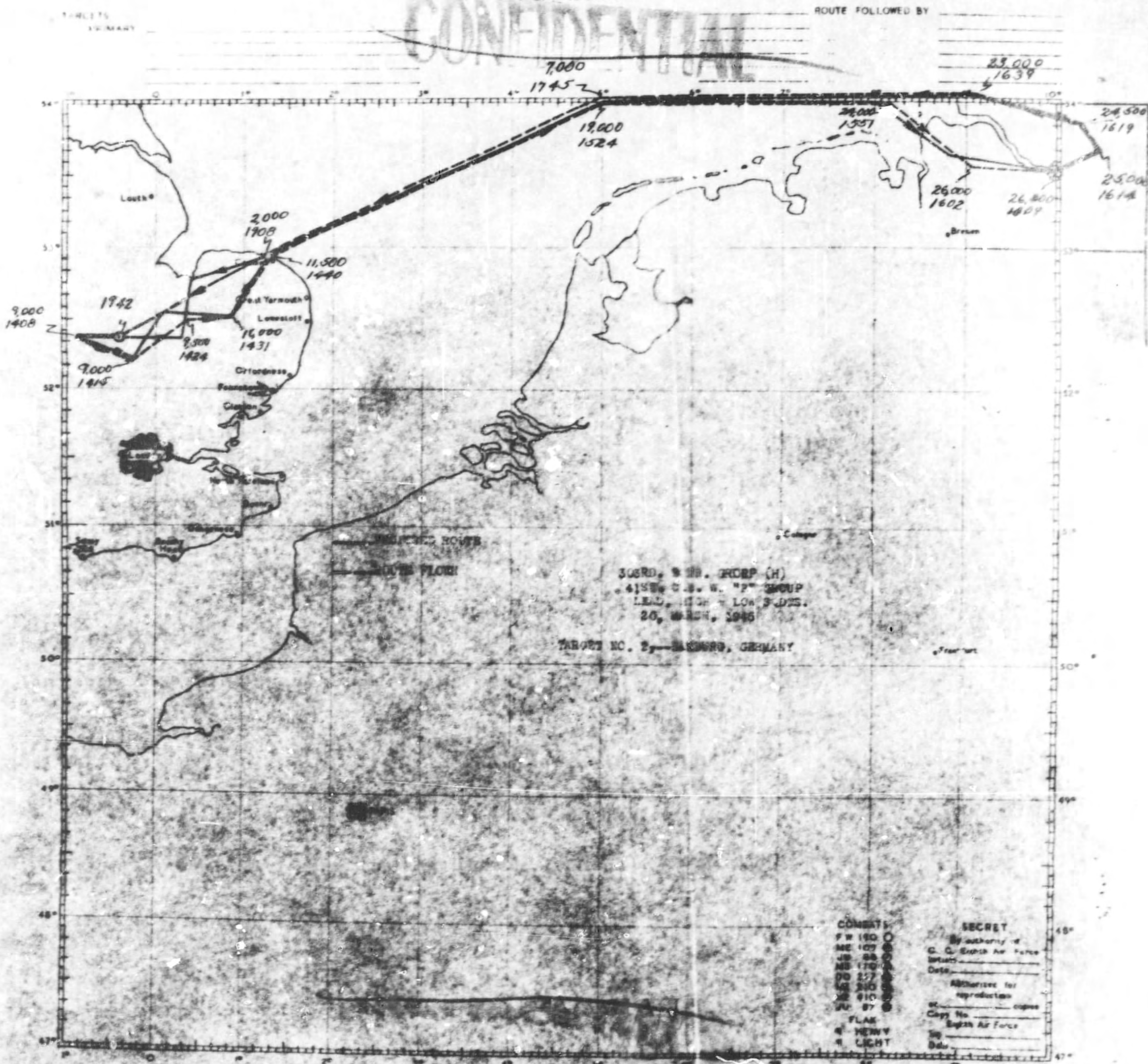
Yours sincerely,

Robert A Gilbert

P.S. I visited Mrs. McWilliams while I was in Santa Ana, Calif. awaiting my discharge. I also met his father and mother and I told them exactly what I have told you in the foregoing.

TRACK CHART

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308RD. W. H. H. (H)
 415th C. S. W. "P" GROUP
 LEAD, HIGH - LOW 3,000 FT.
 20, MARCH, 1946

TARGET NO. 2 - BAMBURG, GERMANY

- COMBAT:
- FW 190 ○
 - ME 109 ○
 - BF 109 ○
 - ME 108 ○
 - DO 217 ○
 - ME 310 ○
 - ME 410 ○
 - JU 87 ○
 - FLAK ○
 - NEWY ○
 - LIGHT ○

SECRET

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MOCR 13569

20 March 1945, 1630 h

near Westerode near Segeberg

Type of plane : Boeing, 99 % wreckage

Crew : 3 corpses, 6 prisoners

MOCR 13569 (3 KIA) 7 EUS plane last seen in area at 1614 h.

on two preceding pp.

2 B17's, other than those identified were missing on 20 Mar 45
RTD but all crew members

13569

2nd Lt. Francis R. Taub	Mrs. Marie Taub (mother) 8524 Lovell Street St. Louis, Missouri
2nd Lt. John T. Cooper, Jr.	Mr. John T. Cooper (father) 256 Lucerne Place Memphis, Tennessee
2nd Lt. Charles F. Johnson	Mrs. Emily F. Johnson (mother) 3810 3rd Street Mt. Rainier, Maryland
S/sgt. Michael A. Degan, Jr.	Mrs. Michael A. Degan (mother) 1131 Avenue C, Bayonne, New Jersey
S/sgt. Walf on E. Christian	Mrs. Robert Christian (mother) 1614 Cove Boulevard Lawton, Oklahoma
S/sgt. Chester S. Maluchnik	Mrs. Jennie Maluchnik (mother) 6150 Frontenac Detroit, Michigan
Sgt. James F. Spenser	Mrs. Lucille M. Hale (mother) 1853 Opal Street San Diego, California
Sgt. Robert A. Gilbert	Mrs. Mary D. Gilbert (mother) 1559 Franklin Street San Francisco, California
Sgt. Elmer D. McWilliams	Mrs. Linda M. McWilliams (wife) 458 Vancouver Avenue Los Angeles, California
Sgt. James L. Hollowell	Mrs. J. L. Hollowell (wife) 701 N. Jefferson Street Friston, Kentucky

INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

13569

Name of crew member: MC. WILLIAMS, Elmer D.
 Rank: Sgt.
 Serial number: 39725831
 Position: ~~Crew (Bomber) or Pilot (Fighter)~~: Waist Gunner

Did he bail out? No

Where? _____

If not, why not? Must have passed out from lack of oxygen (as I did) or was
afraid to jump (not sure)

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: Was right with
him up until the time I passed out and was thrown from the plane (I don't
believe in my mind that he got out)

Was he injured? Not known

Where was he when last seen? In plane just prior to the time I passed out and
plane blew up (I was thrown clear by explosion)

Any hearsay information: None

Source: _____

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: I personally believe
that he was killed in the explosion due to the fact that he was still in
the plane as I was just managing to get to the escape hatch. The plane
must have blown up just as I did.

I am attaching a copy of a letter written to Col. D. P. Poteet,
Casualty Branch, Wash., D.C. which explains the foregoing a little better

Total number of missions of above crew member: 15 (not sure)

Dates and destinations if possible: _____

INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

13569

Name of crew member: DUGAN, Michael A. Jr.
Rank: S. Sgt.
Serial number: 42000066
Position: ~~Crew (Bomber) on flight (Fighter)~~: Bombardier

Did he bail out? Yes

Where? Near Lubeck, Germany (we were picked up together)

If not, why not? _____

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: None (last conversation I had with Dugan was prior to take off)

Was he injured? Yes- Had big toe on right(?) foot blown off

Where was he when last seen? In Stalag Luft 1 and in London, Eng. after our release. (He left for the states before I did)

Any hearsay information: None

Source: _____

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: None

Total number of missions of above crew member: 18

Dates and destinations if possible: Not known

INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

13569

Name of crew member: TAUB, Francis R.
 Rank: 2nd.Lt.
 Serial number: 0-779002
 Position: ~~Crew (Bomber)~~ ~~or~~ ~~Flight (Fighter)~~: Pilot

Did he bail out? Don't know. (don't beleive so)

Where? Not known

If not, why not? Don't know

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: Heard him
tell crew to "bail out"

Was he injured? Don't know

Where was he when last seen? In plane prior to take off

Any hearsay information: None

Source: _____

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: Beleive he must
have stayed with the plane as long as possible, enabling the rest of
the crew to bail out. Was probably killed in the explosion.

(This is just what I think as we saw no trace of him after
we were captured)

Total number of missions of above crew member: 18

Dates and destinations if possible: Not known

INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE 13569

Name of crew member: COOPER, John T. Jr.
Rank: 2nd.Lt.
Serial number: 0-929145
Position: ~~Crew (Bomber) or Flight (Fighter)~~: Co-Pilot

Did he bail out? Don't know (don't beleive so)

Where? Not known

If not, why not? Don't know

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: None

Was he injured? Not known

Where was he when last seen? In plane prior to take off

Any hearsay information: None

Source:

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: Beleive he stayed with plane helping Pilot keep plane level for rest of crew to bail out.

Was probably killed in explosion. (this is just a supposition as we saw no sign of him after that)

Total number of missions of above crew member: 18

Dates and destinations if possible: Not known

Name of crew member: TAUB, Francis R.
 Rank: 2nd. Lt.
 Serial number: 0-779002
 Position: ~~Crew (Bomber) or Navigator~~: Pilot

Did he bail out? I DON'T KNOW

Where? _____

If not, why not? THE EMERGENCY HATCH WOULDN'T OPEN READILY

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: ORDER

TO BAIL OUT BY INTERPHONE

Was he injured? I DON'T KNOW

Where was he when last seen? IN THE AIRPLANE

Any hearsay information: SEEN IN THE CAT WALK TO THE

ESCAPE NOSE HATCH. ENGINEER AND NAVIGATOR

HAD A HARD TIME GETTING IT OFF. ENG. & NAV.

~~AND~~ FEEL THEY WERE PULLED OUT FORCE

RATHER THAN THEIR OWN EFFORTS

Source: OBSERVATION FROM CREW MEMBERS

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: STAYED

IN PLANE SINCE THE PLANE CAUGHT FIRE

AND EXPLODED. DON'T KNOW WHY BOMB

BAY WASN'T USED. ONE ATTACK GOT OUR

PLANE FROM UNDERNEATH MAYBE THAT FOULED THE BOMB BAYS

Total number of missions of above crew member: 18

Dates and destinations if possible: MARCH 20-45 TARGET HAMBURG

THE SAME AS McWILLIAMS AS TO VICINITY

Name of crew member: DUGAN, Michael M. Jr.
 Rank: S. Sgt.
 Serial number: 42000066
 Position: ~~Crew (Bomber) or Flight Engineer~~ Bombardier

Did he bail out? Yes - THRU SHOT AWAY PLEXIGLASS NOSE

Where? ABOUT 40 MILES FROM HAMBURG

If not, why not? _____

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: No

CONTACT

Was he injured? Yes, HAD LARGE TOE SHOT OFF

Where was he when last seen? IN STALAG LUFT I

Any hearsay information: _____

Source: _____

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: OUTSIDE

MISSING LARGE DUGAN IS WELL AND

HEARTY

Total number of missions of above crew member: 18

Dates and destinations if possible: LAST MISSION HAMBURG

MARCH 20 - 45. TEST SAME AS PILOT

TAWB.

Name of crew member: COOPER, John, T. Jr.
 Rank: 2nd. Lt.
 Serial number: 0-929145
 Position: ~~COPILOT (ENGINEER) (ENGINEER) (ENGINEER)~~: Co-Pilot

Did he bail out? I DON'T THINK SO

Where? _____

If not, why not? DIDN'T HAVE CHANCE

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: TOLD ENG.

TO CHECK VERTICAL STABILIZER FOR DAMAGE AFTER 1ST ATTACK

Was he injured? NOT TO MY KNOWLEDGE

Where was he when last seen? STILL IN THE PLANE

Any hearsay information: _____

Source: _____

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: WAS SEEN
ON CATWALK TO ESCAPE HATCH THEN THE PLANE
EXPLODED. FEEL HE WAS KILLED IN THE
EXPLOSION.

Total number of missions of above crew member: 18

Dates and destinations if possible: LAST MISSION MARCH 20-45
THE REST SAME AS ON PILOT TAUB.

Name of crew member: MC WILLIAMS, Elmer D.
 Rank: Sgt.
 Serial number: 39725831
 Position: ~~Crew (Bomber)~~ ~~Crew (Fighter)~~: Waist Gunner

Did he bail out? I DON'T THINK SO

Where? _____

If not, why not? DIDN'T HAVE TIME

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: HE STUMBLER

WHILE GOING TO PULL THE HATCH. HE WAS IN SITTING POSITION
BY THE TAIL WHEEL

Was he injured? NOT SO I COULD SEE

Where was he when last seen? IN THE PLANE WHEN BAILED OUT

Any hearsay information: _____

NONE

Source: _____

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: Discussion

BETWEEN MEMBERS DECIDED THAT HE WASN'T INJURED

BUT DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO BAIL OUT. I WAS THE SECOND

ONE OUT AND THE PLANE WENT INTO A SPIN AND

EXPLODED. FEEL McWILLIAMS NEVER GOT OUT.

Total number of missions of above crew member: 10

Dates and destinations if possible: LAST MISSION MARCH 20-1945

TARGET HAMBURG. HIT ABOUT 40 MILES FROM

HAMBURG. PLACE WHERE I BAILED OUT ABOUT 45 MINUTES

TRUCK FROM LUBECK AVERAGING BETWEEN 25-30 MPH.

Name of crew member: **MC WILLIAMS, Elmer D.**
 Rank: **Sgt.**
 Serial number: **39725831**
 Position: ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~: **Waist Gunner**

Did he bail out? Not Known

Where? _____

If not, why not? _____

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: During
Fighter Attack

Was he injured? I Think Not.

Where was he when last seen? Near Waist Escape Hatch.

Any hearsay information: Was Apparently Alright And Near Waist
Escape Hatch When Bill GUNNER AND Redmond Bailed Out.

Source: According To Bill GUNNER And Redmond.

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: NONE OF THE
CREW MEMBERS KNOW WHETHER OR NOT HE BAILED OUT, BUT HE WAS
APPARENTLY UNINJURED. EITHER HE DIDN'T BAIL OUT OR SOMETHING HAPPENED
TO HIM DURING HIS JUMP OR AFTER HIS LANDING. THE LAST IS DOUBTFUL,
FOR NONE OF THE CREW MEMBERS REPORTED ANY VIOLENCE FROM GERMANS

Total number of missions of above crew member: ?? ? 12 or 13 ??

Dates and destinations if possible: Impossible (Check Service Record)

INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

13569

Name of crew member: **TAUB, Francis E.**
 Rank: **2nd. Lt.**
 Serial number: **0-779002**
 Position: ~~Crew (Bombardier Flight) (B-29)~~ **Pilot**

Did he bail out? I THINK HE DID NOT.

Where? _____

If not, why not? POSSIBLY BECAUSE THE SHIP WENT INTO A SPIN.

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: AS I LEFT

FLIGHT DECK TO GO TO FORWARD ESCAPE HATCH.

Was he injured? NO. NOT AS FAR AS I COULD TELL.

Where was he when last seen? IN PILOT'S SEAT.

Any hearsay information: NONE.

Source: _____

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: AS I LEFT THE FLIGHT DECK I TAPPED HIM ON THE SHOULDER AND TOLD HIM I WAS LEAVING. THE SHIP THEN WENT INTO A SPIN AND I THINK IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO GET OUT OF THE COCKPIT.

Total number of missions of above crew member: 18

Dates and destinations if possible: IMPOSSIBLE (CHECK SERVICE RECORD)

Name of crew member: **COOPER, John, T. Jr.**
 Rank: **2nd. Lt.**
 Serial number: **0-929145**
 Position: ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~: **Co-Pilot**

Did he bail out? I Think HE Did Not.

Where? _____

If not, why not? The Ship Was In A Spin.

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: As I Left Flight Deck To Go To Forward Escape Hatch.

Was he injured? Not To My Knowledge

Where was he when last seen? In Co-pilot's Seat.

Any hearsay information: None

Source: _____

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: I Think That It Was Impossible For Him To get out of the cockpit when The ship Went into The Spin. The Air Plane Exploded And I Doubt If HE Was Out. Neithe The Navigator nor Myself Know Exactly How We got out And We WERE Almost To The Door When The Spin Started.

Total number of missions of above crew member: 18

Dates and destinations if possible: Impossible (Check SERVICE RECORD)