

14169

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

17 Apr  
5797

RESTRICTED

Classification changed  
to **RESTRICTED**  
by **F. M. ...**  
Date 1 MAR 1 1946

A54-233

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11/224:1-2

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Classification changed to **RESTRICTED** by E. M. MOENCH, Capt., A. Date MAR 1 5 1948

WAR DEPARTMENT  
HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES  
WASHINGTON

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 air crew member is officially reported missing.

- ORGANIZATION: Location, by Name Molesworth, Eng. Command or Air Force 8th A.F.  
Group 303rd Bomb; Squadron 427th; Detachment -----
- SPECIFY: Place of Departure Molesworth, Eng.; Course See Attached Chart.  
Target or Intended Destination Wreden, Ger.; Type of Mission Bombardment.
- WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED: 10/10ths high cloud, base 21,000. Dense, persistent contrails, Haze. Air to ground visibility 5-8 miles.
- GIVE: (a) Day 17 Month Apr 11 Year 1945; Time 1503 Location Near Brux, miles. 50°35'N-13°30'E.  
of last known whereabouts of missing aircraft.  
(b) Specify whether aircraft was last sighted (); last contacted by radio (); forced down (); seen to crash (); or information not available (). *132 mi SW of Frankfurt*
- AIRCRAFT WAS LOST, OR IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN LOST, AS A RESULT OF: (Check only one) Enemy Aircraft (); Enemy Anti-Aircraft (); Other Circumstances as follows: \_\_\_\_\_
- AIRCRAFT: Type, Model and Series B-17G; AAF Serial Number 43-37597
- NICKNAME OF AIRCRAFT, if Any Earthquake-McGeone
- ENGINES: Type, Model and Series R 1820-97; AAF Serial Number (a) SW 002312; (b) SW 027336; (c) SW 025177; (d) 41-56847
- INSTALLED WEAPONS (Furnish below Make, Type and Serial Number);  
(a) 1299368 BA; (b) 1530843 BLC; (c) 1299606 BA; (d) 1299045 BA; (e) 1299648 BA; (f) 1530619 BLC; (g) 1530600 BLC; (h) 1299712 BA; (i) 1299343 BA; (j) \_\_\_\_\_; (k) \_\_\_\_\_; (l) \_\_\_\_\_; (m) \_\_\_\_\_; (n) \_\_\_\_\_; (o) \_\_\_\_\_; (p) \_\_\_\_\_
- THE PERSONS LISTED BELOW WERE REPORTED AS: (a) Battle Casualty  of (b) Non Battle Casualty \_\_\_\_\_
- NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew 8; Passengers 0; Total 8  
(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	Current Status
1. Pilot	KAHLER, THOMAS E.	1st Lt.	0-928579	MIA ✓
2. Co-Pilot	COTTON, LEWIS (NMI)	2nd Lt.	0-928974	MIA ✓ RMC RTD
3. Navigator	BOWLER, RICHARD (NMI) JR.	Sgt.	11119798	MIA ✓ RTD
4. Bombardier	FOGARTY, RICHARD T. JR.	T/Sgt.	34352901	MIA ✓ RMC RTD
5. TT Gunner	LOWERY, LLOYD (NMI)	T/Sgt.	34249933	MIA ✓ RTD
6. Radio Gunner	LATZ, LESLIE L.	T/Sgt.	36746521	MIA ✓ RTD
7. BT Gunner	BROUGHTON, WILLIAM A.	S/Sgt.	33064969	MIA ✓ RTD
8. Tail Gunner	SMITH, THEODORE R.	Sgt.	33614944	MIA ✓

MAY 20 1945

- 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	Check Only One Column		
			Contacted by Radio	Last Sighted	Saw Crash or Landing
1. SAOZAS, ARTHUR A.	Sgt.	16187975		X	
2. KROHN, ROBERT	2/Lt.	0-783787		X	
3. CHRISTEN, LOUIS M.	2/Lt.	0-2075111		X	
4. LONSKI, CHARLES J.	1/Lt.	0-1585791		X	

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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, FORCED 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 EXTENT None.

Date of Report 19 April 1945.

*Joseph G. Robinson*  
(Signature of Preparing Officer)

**JOSEPH G. ROBINSON,**  
**Capt. AC.**

17. REMARKS OR EYEWITNESS STATEMENTS:  
**See S-2 Summary Attached.**

*copy to file*

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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 SQ 427th A/C # 43-37597 MISSION DATE 17 April 1945  
FIRST PILOT KAHLER, THOMAS F. 1st Lt. O-828579 DESTINATION Dresden, Ger.  
NAME RANK SER#

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

(a) By coordinates Near Brux - 50°35'N-13°50'E.

(b) Approximate altitude 20,000

(c) Last noted heading Going Down.

(d) If out of formation, approximate distance from formation 3-400 feet below.

2. Describe enemy opposition (intensity of flak, intensity and method of enemy fighter attack, etc., with particular reference to missing aircraft):

**Intense and accurate A/A gunfire over Brux.**

3. Description of extent of damage to missing aircraft (including fires, explosions, etc):

**Received direct hit from A/A gunfire in #3 gas tank and right wing caught on fire. Flames streamed back over top of A/C and all around bomb bay. There was then a large puff as if A/C exploded in air.**

4. If aircraft was out of control describe appearance:

**See par. 3**

(Over)

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

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? In area If, so, give distinguishing markings of Fighter Group if noted (Group number, color and or fighter aircraft numbers, nicknames, etc.). \_\_\_\_\_

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

**No parachutes seen.**

7. Any other remarks not covered by above: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Date of report 19 April 1945.

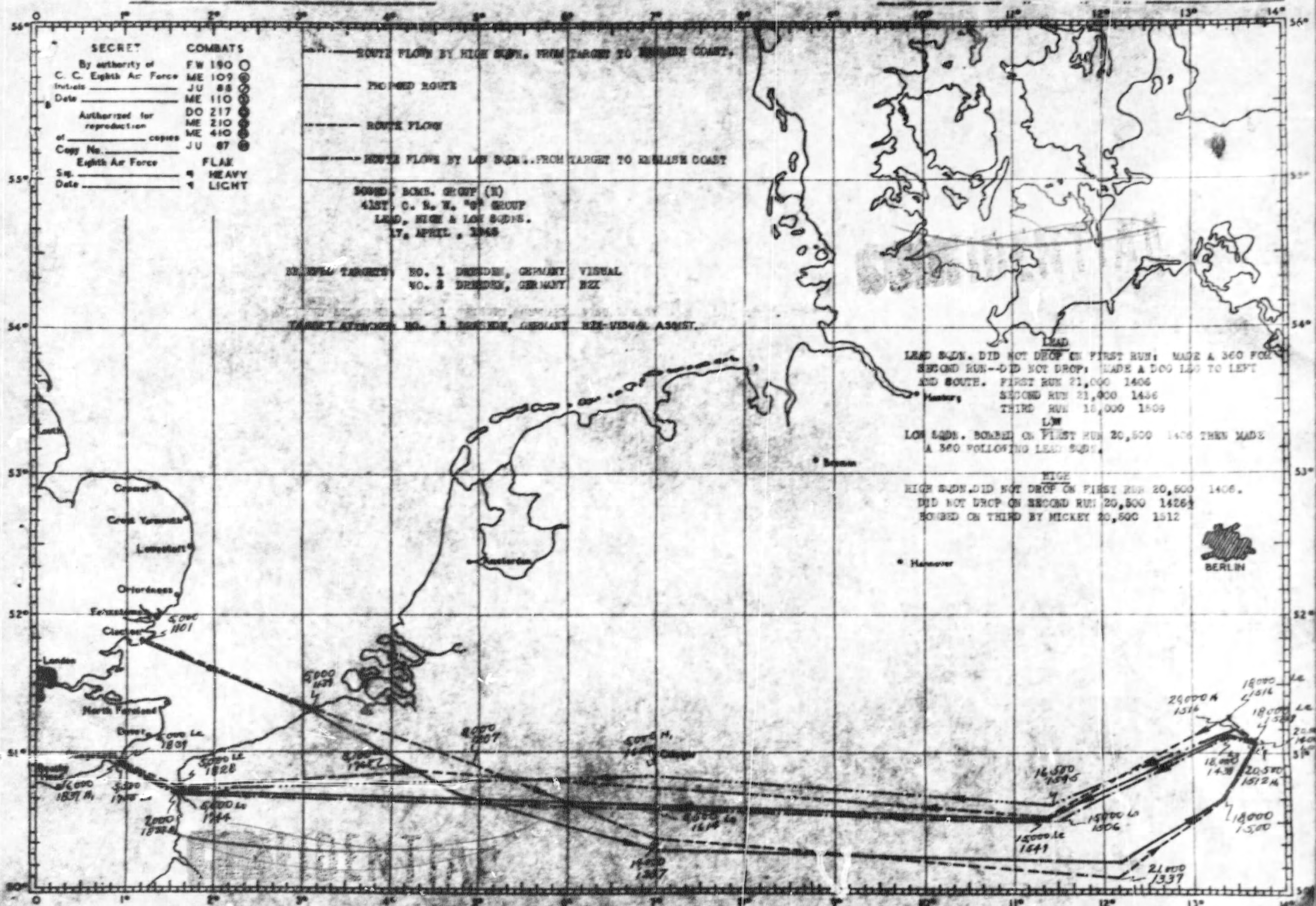
<u>EYE-WITNESSES:</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>SFR #</u>	<u>A/C #</u>
1.	<u>MARZAS, ARTHUR A.</u>	<u>Sgt.</u>	<u>16187975</u>	<u>43-38621</u>
2.	<u>KROHN, ROBERT</u>	<u>2/Lt.</u>	<u>O-785787</u>	<u>43-38621</u>
3.	<u>CHRISTEN, LOUIS M.</u>	<u>2/Lt.</u>	<u>O-2075111</u>	<u>43-38621</u>
4.	<u>LOWSKI, CHARLES J.</u>	<u>1/Lt.</u>	<u>O-1585791</u>	<u>44-85534</u>

INTERROGATING OFFICER (Sign Original and one copy):

Joseph G. Robinson Capt. O-904618 Ass't S-2  
NAME RANK SFR # DUTY

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.

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



**SECRET**

By authority of  
C. C. Eighth Air Force

Initials \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized for  
reproduction \_\_\_\_\_  
of \_\_\_\_\_ copies

Copy No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Eighth Air Force

Sq. \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

**COMBATS**

FW 190 ○  
ME 109 ○  
JU 88 ○  
ME 110 ○  
DO 217 ○  
ME 210 ○  
ME 410 ○  
JU 87 ○

**FLAK**

HEAVY  
LIGHT

ROUTE FLOW BY HIGH SQDN. FROM TARGET TO ENGLISH COAST.

PROPOSED ROUTE

ROUTE FLOW

ROUTE FLOW BY LOW SQDN. FROM TARGET TO ENGLISH COAST

**SQUAD, BOMB. GROUP (H)**  
41ST, C. B. W. "G" GROUP  
LEAD, HIGH & LOW SQDN.  
17, APRIL, 1945

**DESIRED TARGETS** NO. 1 DRESDEN, GERMANY VISUAL  
NO. 2 DRESDEN, GERMANY HZZ

**TARGET ATTACKER** NO. 1 DRESDEN, GERMANY HZZ-VISUAL ASSIST.

**LEAD**  
LEAD SQDN. DID NOT DROP ON FIRST RUN; MADE A 360 FOR  
SECOND RUN--DID NOT DROP; MADE A 90 DEG LEFT  
AND SOUTH. FIRST RUN 21,000 1406  
SECOND RUN 21,000 1436  
THIRD RUN 18,000 1509

**LOW**  
LOW SQDN. BOMBED ON FIRST RUN 20,500 1406 THEN MADE  
A 360 FOLLOWING LEAD SQDN.

**HIGH**  
HIGH SQDN. DID NOT DROP ON FIRST RUN 20,500 1406.  
DID NOT DROP ON SECOND RUN 20,500 1426  
BOMBED ON THIRD BY MICKY 20,500 1512



Coventry  
Great Yarmouth  
Lowestoft  
Orfordness  
Felixstowe  
Clacton  
London  
North Foreland  
Ewelme

5000 1439  
8000 1407  
5000 H. 1442  
5000 H. 1444  
5000 H. 1449  
14000 1337  
15000 Le 1549  
16500 1545  
15000 Le 1506  
18000 1438  
20500 1512 H.  
18000 1516  
20000 H. 1516  
18000 1509



IN REPLY REFER TO: AFPPA-8

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY AIR FORCES  
WASHINGTON



SUBJECT: Casualty Information of Crew Members  
TO: Richard T. Fogarty, Jr., T/Sgt.

1. You will be interested to know that there have been formed here in Washington and in the theaters overseas, Missing Aircrew Research and Investigation Offices to collect all information from our own and enemy sources, correlate this information and furnish it to search teams in the theaters who will go to the scene of the casualty incident and investigate. These teams will question those in the area who have knowledge of the incident and trace all leads down until they have the story. The German records we have translated are excellent. We have just received the Japanese records. By combining all this data with the story available in your memory, we can tell next of kin the things that mean so much to them.

2. You may or may not have been questioned in this manner before concerning the mission on which you were shot down and the events that followed. Regardless of previous questionnaires, it is important that we have the information requested here to complete our records concerning combat crewmen remaining in a casualty status.

3. If you have been sworn to secrecy as a result of your escape, evasion or internment, you may consider yourself released from all restrictions as to disclosure or publication of experiences except:

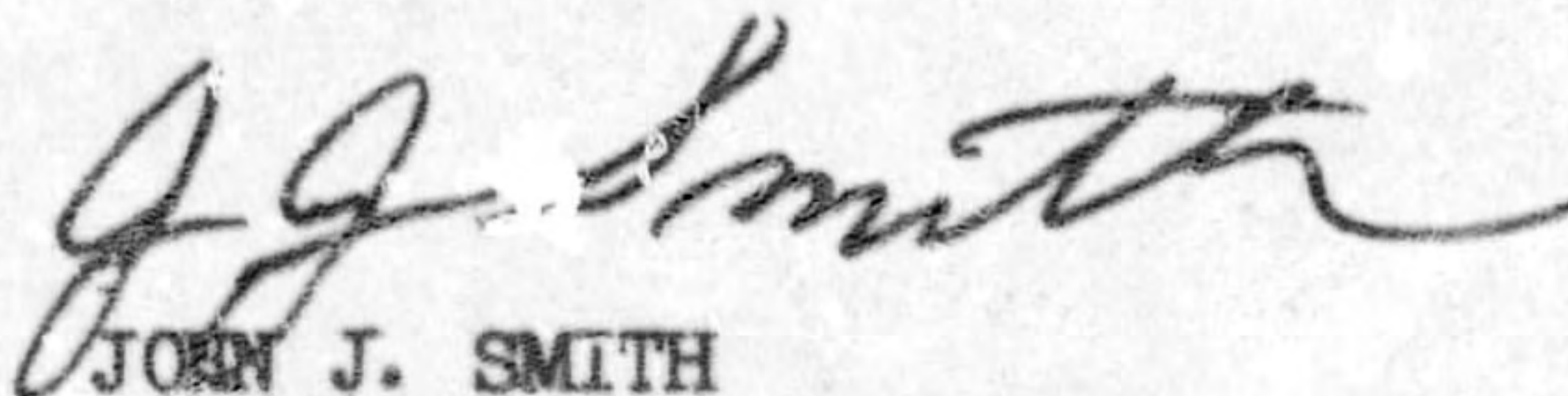
- a. Secret intelligence activities and methods developed for use, or actually used, in prison camps.
  - b. Details of techniques employed by military intelligence organizations operating behind enemy lines to assist evasion and escape.
  - c. Negotiations conducted on high government or military level to secure release from internment in a neutral country. (See AAF Reg 46-8 dated 30 October 1945)
4. Please answer all the questions you can promptly and accurately. Re-

Am attaching two individual casualty questionnaires.

R.T. Fogarty, Jr. 5/8/46  
6-3842, AF

quest that, if possible, answers be typewritten; if not, printed. Mail the reply to Commanding General, Army Air Forces, Attention: AFPPA-8, Washington 25, D. C.

BY COMMAND OF GENERAL ARNOLD:



JOHN J. SMITH  
Lt. Col., Air Corps  
Chief, Notification Section  
Personal Affairs Branch  
Personnel Services Division, AC/AS-1

Incls





HEADQUARTERS, ARMY AIR FORCES

WASHINGTON

IN REPLY REFER TO: AFPPA-8



SUBJECT: Casualty Information of Crew Members

TO: Lewis Cotton, 2nd Lt.

1. You will be interested to know that there have been formed here in Washington and in the theaters overseas, Missing Aircrew Research and Investigation Offices to collect all information from our own and enemy sources, correlate this information and furnish it to search teams in the theaters who will go to the scene of the casualty incident and investigate. These teams will question those in the area who have knowledge of the incident and trace all leads down until they have the story. The German records we have translated are excellent. We have just received the Japanese records. By combining all this data with the story available in your memory, we can tell next of kin the things that mean so much to them.

2. You may or may not have been questioned in this manner before concerning the mission on which you were shot down and the events that followed. Regardless of previous questionnaires, it is important that we have the information requested here to complete our records concerning combat crewmen remaining in a casualty status.

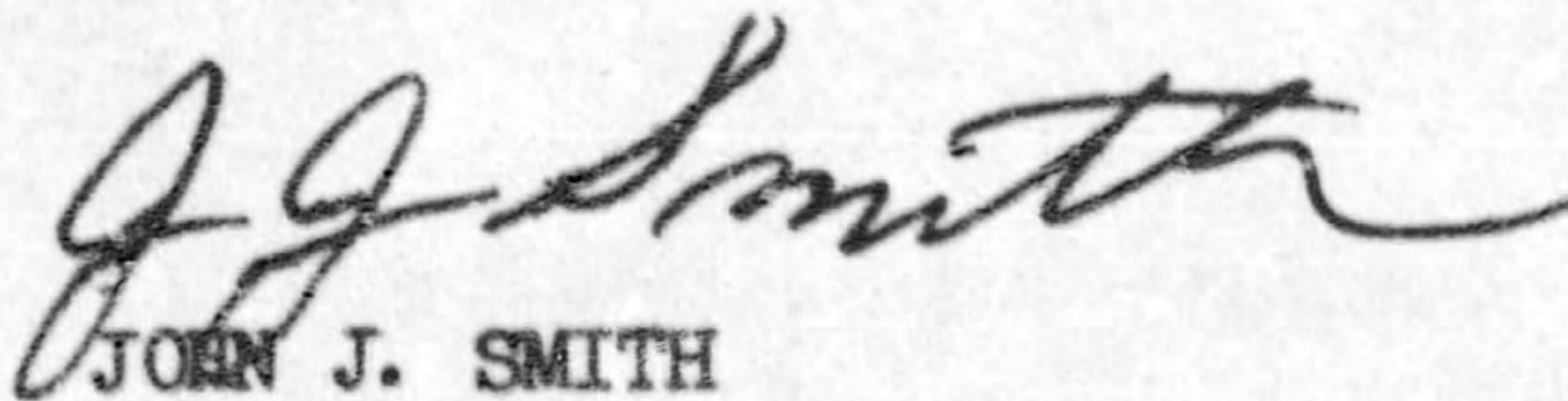
3. If you have been sworn to secrecy as a result of your escape, evasion or internment, you may consider yourself released from all restrictions as to disclosure or publication of experiences except:

- a. Secret intelligence activities and methods developed for use, or actually used, in prison camps.
  - b. Details of techniques employed by military intelligence organizations operating behind enemy lines to assist evasion and escape.
  - c. Negotiations conducted on high government or military level to secure release from internment in a neutral country. (See AAF Reg 46-8 dated 30 October 1945)
4. Please answer all the questions you can promptly and accurately. Re-

6-3842, AF

quest that, if possible, answers be typewritten; if not, printed. Mail the reply to Commanding General, Army Air Forces, Attention: AFPPA-8, Washington 25, D. C.

BY COMMAND OF GENERAL ARNOLD:



JOHN J. SMITH  
Lt. Col., Air Corps  
Chief, Notification Section  
Personal Affairs Branch  
Personnel Services Division, AC/AS-1

Incls

6-3842, AF

INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

14169

Name of crew member: SMITH, Theodore R.  
 Rank: Sgt.  
 Serial number: 33614944  
 Position: Crew (Bomber) ~~on Flight (Fighter)~~: Tail Gunner

Did he bail out? UNKNOWN - HE HAD NOT BAILED OUT BEFORE I DID.

Where? OVER CZECHOSLOVAKIA NEAR BRUX

If not, why not? UNKNOWN

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

LAST OXYGEN CHECK - ABOUT 1 MINUTE BEFORE ACK-ACK HIT PLANE

Was he injured? UNKNOWN

Where was he when last seen? IN HIS POSITION - JUST BEFORE I BAILED OUT

Any hearsay information: NONE - NO OTHER CREW MEMBER

SAW OR HEARD ANYTHING OF HIM AFTER PLANE WAS HIT.

Source: NONE

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

Partly Supposition: - If he did not bail out soon after I did he was probably killed when plane exploded. (still covered) (complete bomb load)  
If he did bail out and landed safely he might have been OR.S. Troops. CIVILIAN  
murdered by civilians. I say this because one tried to shoot me thru the head AS I lay on the ground.

Total number of missions of above crew member: THREE - HE WAS A REPLACEMENT ON OUR CREW.

Dates and destinations if possible: FIRST TWO UNKNOWN.

THIRD - DRESIDEN. - 17 APRIL 45

Broughton, William A. - S/Sgt.  
 Ballurret Gunner

9 April 46

## INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

14169

Name of crew member:

KAHLER, Thomas F.

Rank:

1st Lt.

Serial number:

O-828579

Position: Crew (Bomber) on Flight (Pilot):

Pilot

Did he bail out? UNKNOWN - HE HADN'T WHEN CO-PILOT BAILED OUT.Where? OVER CZECHOSLOVAKIA NEAR BRUXIf not, why not? UNKNOWN

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

LAST OXYGEN CHECK + WAS LAST SEEN BY CO-PILOT (LT. LOUIS COTTON)Was he injured? UNKNOWN.Where was he when last seen? IN PILOT'S POSITION - PREPARING TO ATTACH CHEST PACK.Any hearsay information: CO-PILOT (LT. LOUIS COTTON) CLAIMS LT. KAHLERWAS MOVING OUT OF PILOT'S SEAT TO FOLLOW HIM OUT THE FRONT ESCAPE HATCH.Source: FROM CONVERSATION WITH LT. LOUIS COTTONAny explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: PURELY SUPPOSITION:-IF HE FAILED TO FOLLOW LT. COTTON OUT, HE WAS PROBABLY KILLED WHEN PLANE EXPLODED; WE STILL CARRYING COMPLETE BOMBS LOAD (INCENDIARIES) (100 LB. G.P.'S.)IF HE BAILED AND LANDED SAFELY HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN MURDERED BY CIVILIANS, OR U.S. TROOPS. I SAY THIS BECAUSE A CIVILIAN TRIED TO SHOOT ME THRU' THE HEAD AS I LAY ON THE GROUND.Total number of missions of above crew member: THIRTY FOUR MISSIONS.

Dates and destinations if possible: \_\_\_\_\_

1<sup>ST</sup> TO 33<sup>RD</sup> MISSIONS - UNABLE TO FURNISH ACCURATE INFORMATION ON THIS.34<sup>TH</sup> - DRESDEN - 17 APRIL 45.

Broughton, William A. - S/Sgt.  
Ball Turret Gunner.

6-3861, AF

## INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

14169

Name of crew member: SMITH, Theodore R.  
 Rank: Sgt.  
 Serial number: 33614944  
 Position: Crew (Bomber) or Flight (Fighter): Tail Gunner

Did he bail out? UNKNOWN

Where? —

If not, why not? POSSIBLY INJURED; OR RENDERED UNCONSCIOUS BY FAILURE OF OXYGEN SUPPLY.

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

OXYGEN CHECK - PRIOR TO LOSS OF PLANE

Was he injured? UNKNOWN

Where was he when last seen? APR. 17 - 1945  
AAF. BASE - MOLESWORTH - ENGLAND

Any hearsay information: NONE

Source: —

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: MY SUPPOSITION: —

UPON BAILING OUT - WAIST DOOR - I NOTICED, TAIL GUNNER'S ESCAPE HATCH STILL CLOSED. PLANE BLEW UP SECONDS LATER. MY ASSUMPTION TAIL GUNNER DID NOT ESCAPE.

Total number of missions of above crew member: UNKNOWN - (T.G. WAS SUBSTITUTE FILL IN)

Dates and destinations if possible: —



INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of crew member: SMITH , Theodore R.  
Rank: Sgt.  
Serial number: 33614944  
Position: Crew (Bomber) ~~on Flight (Fighter)~~: Tail Gunner

Did he bail out? I don't know

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, why not? I think he was killed in the plane

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: Just be-

fore we got two direct hits, after that I could not get any one on the  
interphone.

Was he injured? Don't know

Where was he when last seen? Don't know

Any hearsay information: No

Source: \_\_\_\_\_

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: Don't know

Total number of missions of above crew member: I don't know

Dates and destinations if possible: I don't know

## INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

14169

Name of crew member: KAHLER , Thomas F.  
Rank: 1st Lt.  
Serial number: 0-828579  
Position: Crew (Bomber) or Pilot (Fighter) Pilot

Did he bail out? I don't know

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, why not? Don't know

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: Just before we got two direct hits

Was he injured? Don't know

Where was he when last seen? Sitting at his position

Any hearsay information: No

Source: \_\_\_\_\_

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: The Co-Pilot the plane blew up right after we left

Total number of missions of above crew member: 34

Dates and destinations if possible: Don't know



## INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of crew member: SMITH, Theodore R.  
 Rank: Sgt.  
 Serial number: 33614944  
 Position: Crew (Bomber) or Flight (Fighter): Tail Gunner

Did he bail out? NO

Where? -

If not, why not? I BELIEVE THE PLANE BLEW UP BEFORE HE COULD JUMP

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: INTERPHONE CHECK ABOUT 2 MIN. BEFORE WE RECEIVED THE DIRECT HITS.

Was he injured? NOT BEFORE THE DIRECT HITS

Where was he when last seen? IN POSITION AS TAIL GUNNER

Any hearsay information: NONE

Source: -

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: I BELIEVE THAT SMITH WAS HIT WHEN WE RECEIVED THE DIRECT HITS, CAUSING LOSS OF PLANE. THE BALL GUNNER & RADIO OPERATOR WERE BOTH WOUNDED, AND SAID THAT SECTION OF PLANE WAS BADLY TURN UP. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO CHECK WITH ANY ONE BECAUSE INTERPHONE & ALL ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT WAS OUT.

Total number of missions of above crew member: UNKNOWN - HE WAS FLYING AS A REPLACEMENT GUNNER.

Dates and destinations if possible: -

*James Cotton*

Name of crew member:

KAHLER, Thomas F.

Rank:

1st Lt.

Serial number:

O-828579

Position: Crew (Bomber) ~~Crew (Fighter)~~ PilotDid he bail out? NOWhere? —If not, why not? UNKNOWNLast contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: A FEW SECONDSJUST BEFORE WE WERE HITWas he injured? NOWhere was he when last seen? IN POSITION IN COCKPITAny hearsay information: NONESource: —

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: I had KNOWN  
KAHLER TO FREEZE OR ACT AS IF HE COULDN'T THINK WHAT  
TO DO FOR SEVERAL SECONDS, ON OTHER OCCASIONS WHEN  
WE HAD BEEN IN TIGHT PLACES! THAT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN THE  
CASE THAT DAY

Total number of missions of above crew member: 34Dates and destinations if possible: UNKNOWN