

12439

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Classification changed to **RESTRICTED**  
by E. A. BRADDAE, Lt. Col., AG  
by F. H. MUNCH, Capt., AG  
Date **APR 15 1948**

Date	Writer	Subject
4-22-48	Kish	Pace

Case completed

5717-68

GERMAN RECORDS  
COMPLETED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Classification changed

**RESTRICTED**

WAR DEPARTMENT

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES

by E. A. BRADUNAS, Lt. Col., AO

WASHINGTON

12439

Date MAR 15 1946

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 B.(H); Squadron 427th; Detachment -----
- SPECIFY: Place of Departure Molesworth, Eng.; Course See Attached Chart  
Target or Intended Destination Langendreer, Ger.; Type of Mission Bombardment
- WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED: 1-3/10ths  
stratus, tops 2,000. 5/10ths high cloud, base 25-26,000. Dense persistent contrails.
- GIVE: (a) Day 16 Month February Year 1945; Time 1407 Location 52°45'N-07°00'E  
of last known whereabouts of missing aircraft.  
(b) Specify whether aircraft was last sighted (X); last contacted by radio ( ); Forced down ( ); Seen to Crash ( ); or Information not available ( ).
- AIRCRAFT WAS LOST, OR IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN LOST, AS A RESULT OF: (Check only one) Enemy Aircraft ( ); Enemy Anti-Aircraft (X); Other Circumstances as follows: \_\_\_\_\_
- AIRCRAFT: Type, Model and Series B-17G; AAF Serial Number 43-39081
- NICKNAME OF AIRCRAFT, if Any None
- ENGINES: Type, Model and Series R-1820-97; AAF Serial Number (a) SW-031660; (b) SW-031664; (c) SW-031665; (d) SW-031817
- INSTALLED WEAPONS (Furnish below Make, Type and Serial Number);  
(a) 1183478 S.A.; (b) 210294 G.M.C.; (c) 210731 G.M.C.; (d) 70283 G.M.C.  
(e) 745234 COLT; (f) 714798 COLT; (g) 1262382 FRIG; (h) 1245864 FRIG  
(i) 157705 HI.ST.; (j) 1265634 FRIG; (k) 742043 COLT; (l) \_\_\_\_\_  
(m) \_\_\_\_\_; (n) \_\_\_\_\_; (o) \_\_\_\_\_; (p) \_\_\_\_\_
- THE PERSONS LISTED BELOW WERE REPORTED AS: (a) Battle Casualty X  
of (b) Non Battle Casualty \_\_\_\_\_
- NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew 9; Passengers 0; Total 9  
(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
<i>EUS</i> 1. Pilot	<i>M</i> WERTZ, ROBERT M.	1st Lt. 9	0-793873	<i>EUS</i> MIA <i>15007</i>
<i>EUS</i> 2. Co-Pilot	<i>D</i> URST, MELVIN A.	2nd Lt. 3	0-927606	<i>EUS</i> MIA
<i>EUS</i> 3. Navigator	<i>M</i> MINNIS, EARL (NMI)	2nd Lt. 6	0-2065595	<i>EUS</i> MIA
<i>KIA</i> 4. Bombardier	<i>M</i> PRICE, JOHN B.	T/Sgt. 7	37425170	MIA <i>CHH</i>
<i>KIA</i> 5. Top Turret Gnr	<i>M</i> WARNE, RALPH N.	T/Sgt. 4	12142954	MIA <i>CHH</i>
<i>EUS</i> 6. Radio Gunner	<i>G</i> IERING, EDWARD J.	T/Sgt. 4	11102375	<i>EUS</i> MIA
<i>EUS</i> 7. Ball Turret Gnr	<i>J</i> ENSEN, KENNETH E.	S/Sgt. 5	39216299	<i>EUS</i> MIA
<i>EUS</i> 8. Waist Gunner	<i>C</i> AMPBELL, WALTER C.	S/Sgt. 2	6575542	<i>EUS</i> MIA
<i>DED</i> 9. Tail Gunner	<i>B</i> ENNETT, KENNETH A.	Sgt. 1	17169985	MIA <i>CHH</i>
10.				
11.				

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	Check Only One Column			
			Contacted by Radio	Saw Sighted	Saw Forced Landing	Saw
1. <u>McKEON, PRESTON W.</u>	<u>2nd Lt.</u>	<u>0-2059811</u>		<u>X</u>		
2.						
3.						

(Over)

*Im 5*

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) A/C flying under control when last seen.
14. ATTACH AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH, MAP, CHART, OR SKETCH, SHOWING APPROXIMATE LOCATION WHERE AIRCRAFT WAS LAST SEEN OR HEARD FROM. See attached sheet.
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 21 February 1945.

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

17. REPORTS OR EYEWITNESS STATEMENTS:

JOSEPH G. ROBINSON,  
Captain, AC,  
Ass't. Group S-2.

See S-2 Summary attached.

MAR 28 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 SQ 427th A/C # 43-39081 MISSION DATE 16 Feb. 1945  
FIRST PILOT WERTZ, ROBERT M. 1st Lt. 0-793373 DESTINATION Langendreeer, Germany  
NAME RANK SER.# <sup>51.28N-7.18E</sup>

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

- (a) By coordinates 52°45'N--07°00E.
- (b) Approximate altitude 20,000 feet.
- (c) Last noted heading West
- (d) If out of formation, approximate distance from formation About 8,000 feet below and several miles behind.

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. 15-20 unidentified single engine A/C were seen flying below formation, but there were no reports of any attacks by E/A on that date.

3. Description of extent of damage to missing aircraft (including fires, explosions, etc): Missing A/C received a direct hit from A/A gunfire in #1 engine. The engine came completely off the A/C and went back and hit the fuselage of the A/C about the waist window. The engine made a hole in the fuselage and then fell away.

4. If aircraft was out of control describe appearance:

A/C was momentarily out of control just after the engine was hit. Pilot seemed to be able to regain control, and when last seen the A/C appeared to be under control although it was losing altitude and lagging behind the formation.

(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? None 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.):

None seen.

7. Any other remarks not covered by above:

43-39081 -- Missing A/C  
|  
43-38248  
Reporting A/C |

8. Date of report 21 February 1945.

<u>EYE-WITNESSES:</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>SER #</u>	<u>A/C #</u>
1.	MC KEON, PRESTON W.	2nd Lt.	O-2059811	43-38248
2.				
3.				
4.				

INTERROGATING OFFICER (Sign Original and one copy):

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

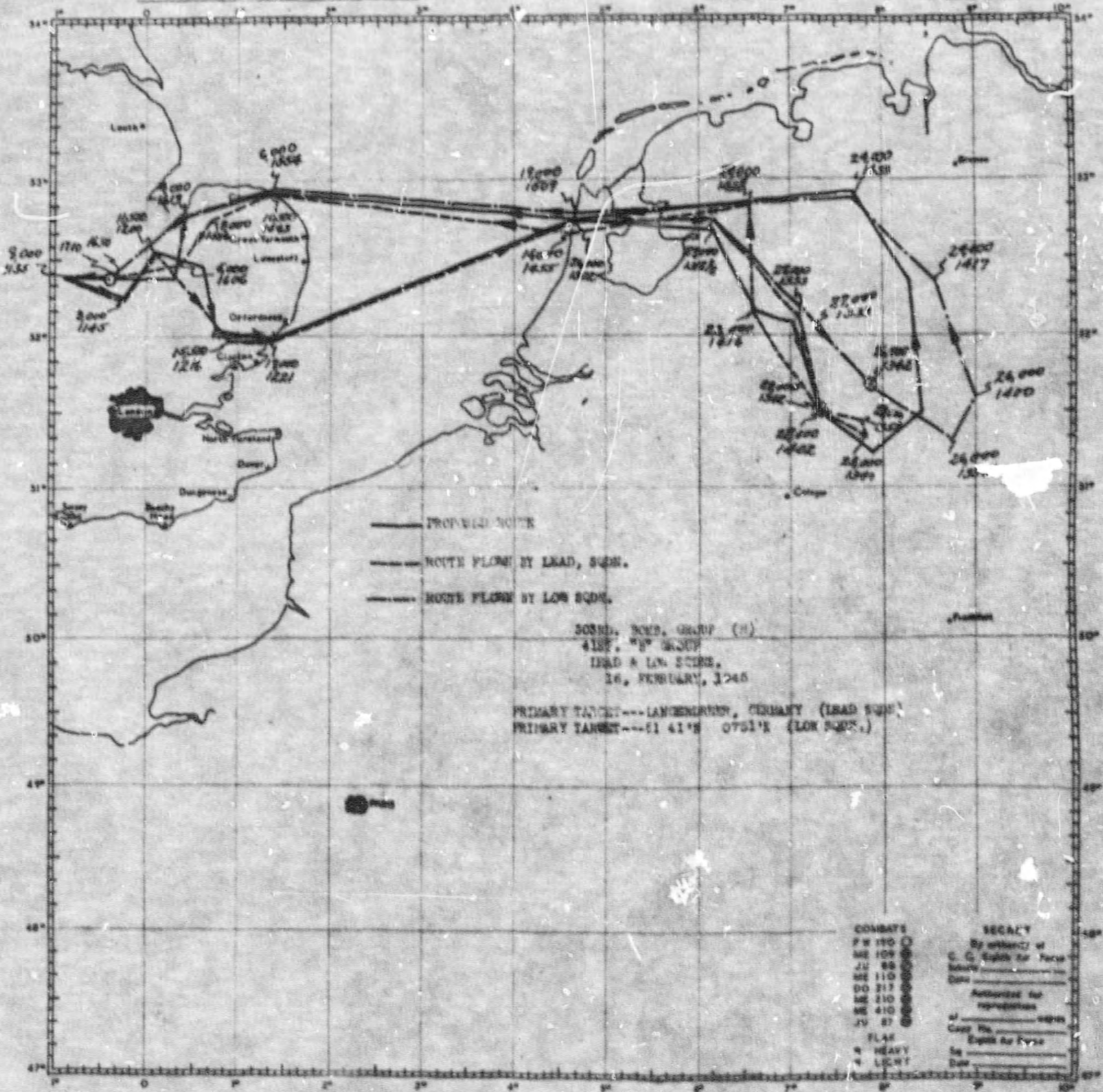
NOTE: Supplemental information developing subsequent to this account will be forwarded in manner prescribed in par 6, letter WD, AG, 704 (5 July 44) OB-S-AAF-M, subject "Missing Air Crew Report", 7 July 1944.

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

**CONFIDENTIAL**

TARGETS  
PRIMARY

ROUTE FOLLOWED BY



The missing A/C was in the lead squadron.

NAIR 12439

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

*no map needed*

COPY OF TRANSLATION OF GERMAN REPORT KU 1276a

CASUALTY NO. KU 1276a

DATE AND TIME AIRCRAFT  
WAS SHOT DOWN

16 Feb. 1945 1430 hrs.

PLACE OF CRASH

Southeast of Klove

TYPE OF AIRCRAFT

Fortress

REPORTING OFFICE Hq

Local Airbase Gelsenkirchen-Bushr

WITZ, Robert Maxwell  
2 Jan. 1920

1/Lt/

O-293873

Captured

Dulag-Luft West

NIENIE, Earl

2/Lt

O-2085595

"

"

"

"

DURST, Melvin A.

2/Lt/

O-927606

"

"

"

"

CAMPBELL, Walter Cole

S/Sgt.

8575542

"

"

"

"

GHYRING, Edward James

T/Sgt.

11102275

"

"

"

"

JENSEN, Kenneth Ewan  
23 Jan. 1923

S/Sgt.

39216299

"

"

"

"

WARNE, Ralph

T/Sgt.

12142954

Dead

"

"

"

REMARKS: Dulag-Luft 9 March 1945 v.s.

COPY OF TRANSLATION OF GERMAN RECORD      KU 1276a

Date:	16 Feb. 45, at 1430	1st Lt.	WERTZ, Robert Maxwell ASN O-293873
Place:	SE Kleve	2nd Lt.	DURST, Melvin A. ASN O-927606
Type of Craft	Fortress	2nd Lt.	Minnus, Earl ASN O-2065595
Markings	.....038 427 ( ) Sq 303 Gp.	2nd Lt.	PRICE
		T/Sgt.	WALNE (or WARNE) Ralph ASN 12142954
Target	Air Base Command Gelsenkirchen-Buer	T/Sgt.	GEIRING Edward James ASN 11100375
		S/Sgt.	JENSEN, Kenneth Avan ASN 39216299
		S/Sgt.	BENNETT
		S/Sgt.	CAMPBELL, Walter Cole ASN 6575542
		S/Sgt.	



COPY OF TRANSLATION OF GERMAN RECORD KU 1276a

Date: 16 Feb 45, at 1430

Place: SE Klove

Type of craft: Fortress

Markings: .....038  
427 ( ) Sqd.  
303 Group

Target: Air Base Command  
Gelsenkirchen-Buer

1st Lt. WERTZ, Robert Maxwell .  
ASN: 0-293873

2nd Lt. DURST, Melvin A. .  
ASN: 0-927606

2nd Lt. MINNIS, Earl .  
ASN: 0-2065595

2nd Lt. PRIDE dead

T/Sgt. WALNE (or WARNE), Ralph dead  
ASN 12112954

T/Sgt. GEIRING, Edward James .  
ASN: 11102375

S/Sgt. JENSEN, Kenneth Evan .  
ASN: 39216299

S/Sgt. BENNETT

S/Sgt. CAMPBELL, Walter Cole .  
ASN: 6575542

DATE AND TIME AIRCRAFT WAS SHOT DOWN: 14 Jan. 1945, 1430  
 REPORTING OFFICE NO. KU 1276 A

PLACE OF CRASH: southeast of Alton

TYPE OF AIRCRAFT: P-51

REPORTING OFFICE: 14 Base Gelsenkirchen-Buchholz

NAME	RANK	SERIAL NUMBER	CAPTURED WOUNDED DEAD	PLACE OF INTERNMENT
WERTZ, Robert Maxwell 2 Jan. 1920	1/Lt.	0-293873	captured	Dulag-Luft Test
HINNIS, Earl	2/Lt.	0-2065595	"	"
DURST, Melvin A.	2/Lt.	0-927606	"	"
CAMPBELL, Walter Cole	S/Sgt.	6575542	"	"
GEYRING, Edward James	T/Sgt.	11102375	"	"
JENSEN, Kenneth Evan 23 Jan. 1923	S/Sgt.	39216299	"	"
<b>KIA</b> WAHNE, Ralph	T/Sgt.	12142954	dead	

Case 5420  
 MARK 12439

MACR 12439  
 TB 17  
 a memo

AA 43-39081  
 15 Feb 45

16 Feb 45

REMARKS: Dulag-Luft, 9 March 1945 v.S.

MACR  
 12439  
 D 17  
 9 men  
 AAF 43-39061

		Rank:	Name:	KU 1276A
Date:	16 Feb 45, at 1430	1st Lt.	NEETS, Robert Maxwell ASN: 0-293873	.
Place:	SE Klove	2nd Lt.	DURST, Melvin A. ASN: 0-927606	.
Type of craft:	Fortress	2nd Lt.	MINNIS, Earl ASN: 0-205577	.
Markings:	.....038	2nd Lt.	PRICE,	dead
	427 ( ) Sqd. 303 Group	KIA T/Sgt.	WALNE (or WARNE), Ralph ASN: 12142554	dead
Targets:	Air Base Command Gelsenkirchen-Buer	T/Sgt.	GEIRING, Edward James ASN: 11102375	.
		S/Sgt.	JENSEN, Kenneth Evan ASN: 39216299	.
		S/Sgt.	PERNETT	.
		S/Sgt.	CAMPBELL, Walter Cole ASN: 6975542	.

Cool # 5420

TELEGRAM FORM

DISTANCE - MESSAGE

- OBERURSEL -

NAME OF DISTANCE-MESSAGE WRITER: **LLBL 533**

ACCEPTED:

DELIVERED:

RECEIVED:

DATE: -

TIME:

TO:

DATE: **28 February 1945**

THROUGH:

TIME: **0130**

ROLL:

FROM: **LLFA**

THROUGH: **(illegible)**

REMARKS:

**SSD LINDS 519 25 February 1945 2200  
To Research Center West, Oberursel/Ts.**

**Later report to downing of a Boeing Fortress on 16 February 1945, 1352,  
in Oberschölvon, Altendorferstreet.**

**The missing named Hjoft8th has been recovered as unknown dead. He is not to  
identify.**

**The named of 9th also dead. Name: Sgt. RALPHWARNE Ser.No.: 12142954.**

**Airdrome Command Colabuer  
Signed: ANCEMENDST S/Sgt.**

KU - 1254 A

MACR-72439

1 Identification Card

Melvin A. Durat

2nd Lt. AC.

O-927606



1st Lt. Robert M. Wertz

Mrs. Roberta S. Wertz (mother) ✓  
229 Overlook Avenue  
Belleville, New Jersey

2nd Lt. Melvin A. Durst

Mrs. Eleanor L. Durst (wife) ✓  
R.F.D.  
Esparto, California

2nd Lt. Earl Minnis

Mrs. Chrystal M. Minnis (mother) ✓  
Bakewell, Tennessee

T/Sgt. John B. Price

Mrs. Minnie B. Price (Mother) ✓  
3012 Newland Road Route 2  
Des Moines, Iowa

T/Sgt. Ralph N. Warne

Mrs. Margaret Meister (mother) ✓  
3417 W. Penn Street  
East Falls, Pennsylvania

T/Sgt. Edward J. Giering

Mrs. Agnes M. Giering (mother) ✓  
943 First Avenue  
West Haven, Connecticut

S/Sgt. Kenneth E. Jensen

Mr. Clarence Jensen (mother) ✓  
2712 East 16th Street  
Bremerton, Washington

Sgt. Kenneth A. Bennett

Dr. Andrew W. Bennett (father) ✓  
1105 Kirkswood Avenue  
Iowa City, Iowa

S/Sgt. Walter C. Campbell

Mrs. Elonza A. Campbell ✓  
Route #1 Box 66  
Waitsburg, Washington

12439

Wentz, Robert M.

0793573

RMC-NS-ETO-149072

EUS-NS-ETO-169043

12439

Minnis, Earl.

02065595

RMC-NS-ETO-132085

EUS-NS-ETO-165120