

August 7, 2000

Russell Strong
5323 Cheval Place
Charlotte, NC 28205

Mr. Strong:

Sorry it has taken me so long to get back to you. Enclosed is a check for \$45.00 for the combat missions of my Grandfather, F/O Howard E. LeCompte. I wanted to thank you again for all the information you have been giving me. I did contact Mr. Grunski, although he did not have a lot of info on my Grandfather, he did give me some personal aspects that I would have never been able to get from a book, THANK YOU.

I was also wondering if there is a way and at what cost it would take to have an article placed in your newsletter "ECHOES"? Robert Vieille's niece and her husband, Sandy, have combined forces with me in order to locate the families of the crew of "Combined Operations" and find out exactly what happened on that fateful day, there are A LOT of unanswered questions. Sandy has actually made a trip to the Isle of Man and is in coordination with the historian there trying to get a memorial plaque placed at the crash site. We would love to find these families so that we can pass on the information we have found and coordinate with them to have a memorial placed where it belongs.

Thank you again for all of your help.

Sincerely,

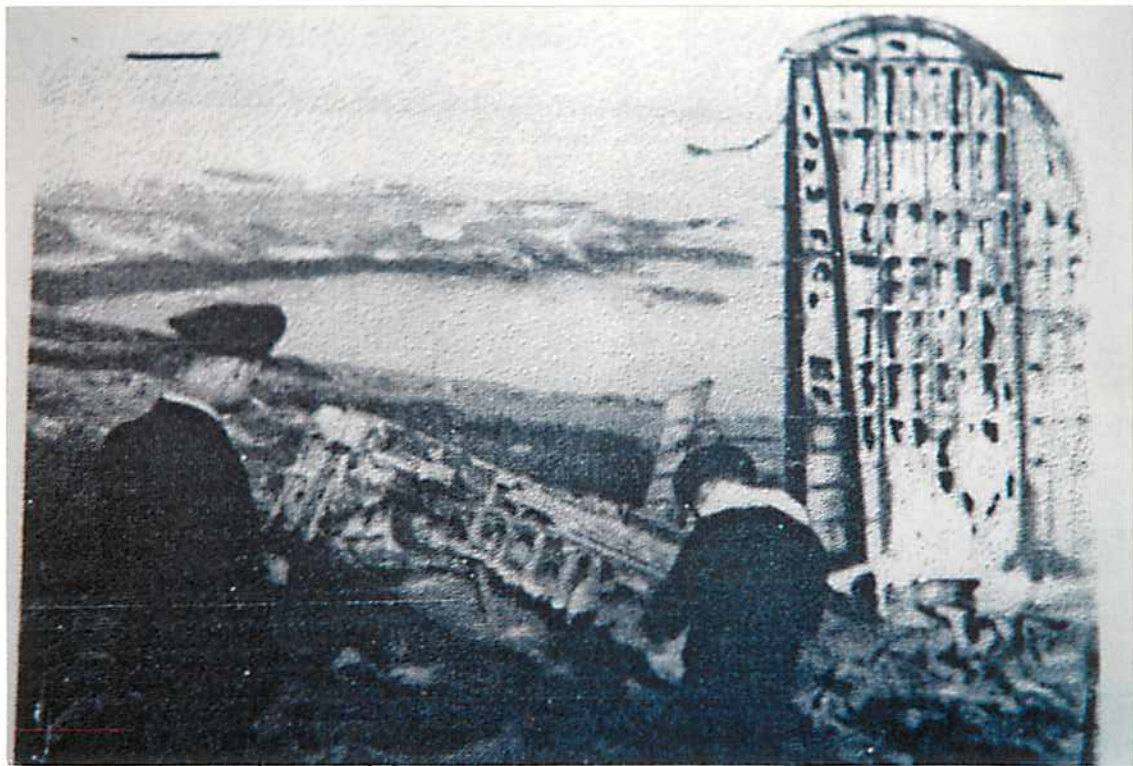
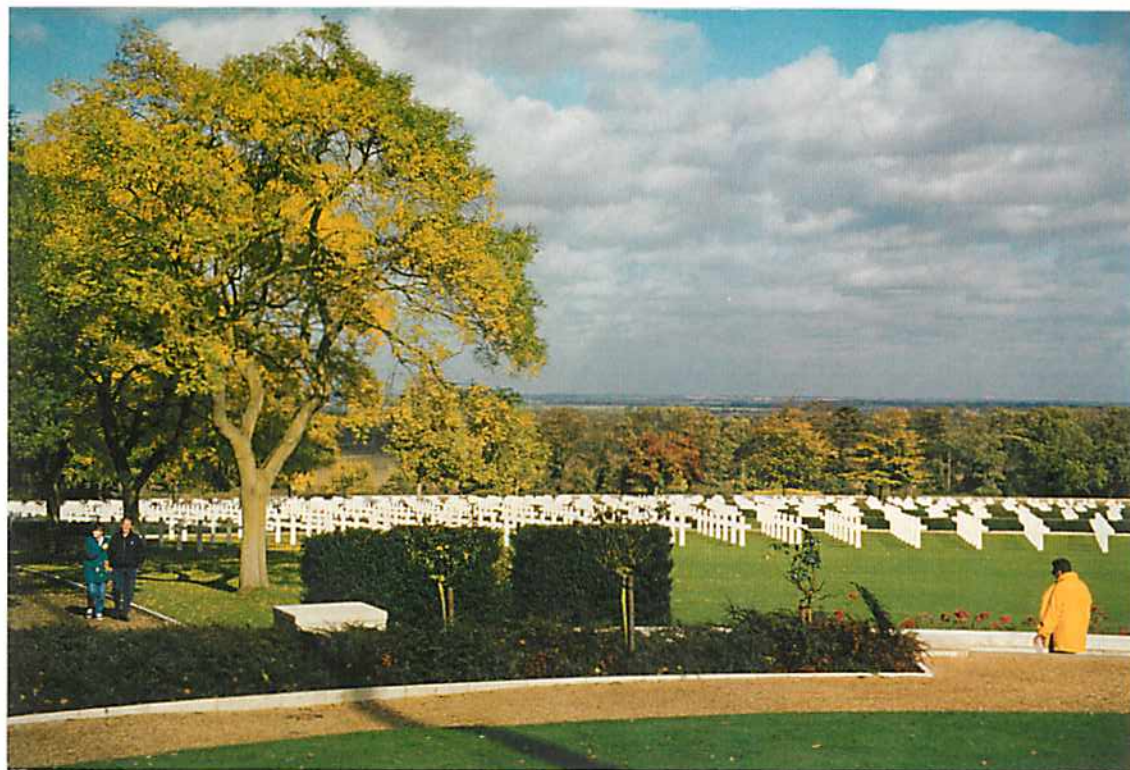


Kim Sumek
12080-146 Calle de Medio
El Cajon, CA 92019
619-670-4818
e-mail: LENCO1KS@aol.com

Madingley - 8 of the
crash victims are
still buried there →



Ann Vieille and author, Stephen
Poole, crash site, Oct. 1998.



Crash photo, April 15, 1945

November 25, 1945

Dear Sir:

I wish to make this letter as informal as possible because actually writing it is not "line of duty." I knew and liked your son Robert very well and was in command of the Squadron when the unfortunate accident occurred.

Robert had been doing a good job and deserved a rest so I let him have a B-17 to go to North Ireland for a week-end pass with his crew, my operations officer, Capt. Butterfield, my Executive officer Capt. Cubberly, two of my top gunnery Sgts. and a Red Cross girl Emile Res. I had flown in that direction several times in B-17's, C-64's, P-47's and P-51's and knew the dangers of navigation so I personally briefed Capt. Butterfield about the Isle of Man. It has an altitude of over 2000 feet tapering off on the Southern end to approx. 500 ft. The weather was good above 5000 feet and the aircraft was cleared at 6000 from here and was to stay at that altitude until it reached Langford Lodge, Ireland. The aircraft was seen before it hit the hill on the southern end of the Isle of Man and all four engines were going all right. The aircraft was about four miles north of course and much lower than it should have been. It was apparent that even through the poor visibility at the altitude where it struck that the aircraft was climbing and turning at the time of impact. The aircraft skipped and went into a stone wall. I flew over myself, immediately upon hearing the news, to Ronaldsway Air Base which is just six miles from where the crash occurred. A very good friend of mine, Com. Rylance of the British Navy was one of the first people on the scene. It was impossible to tell who was piloting the airplane at the time of the crash. The whole affair from start to finish was instantaneous. All bodies were identified and were flown back to England for burial as I have written you before, or rather to Robert's wife.

It was by far the most heartfelt accident this group has ever had. I have flown two full combat tours and have seen five B-17's going down in flame at the

-2-

same time but never have I felt so badly about any misfortune as I felt about your son's and the other of my friends'.

I am sorry it took so long to answer your letter but such information is classified and during and for some time after the war was not to be divulged to anyone. Army records do not tell the whole story.

You have my deepest sympathy and assurance that if I can be of any further aid as a source of information concerning your son I shall willingly ease your mind on any point that I can.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) - Earl W. Kesling

11 December 2000

Dear Kim:

Included in this mailing are all the Mission Reports I can find for your grandfather. While my record card has a notation that he flew 26 missions, I think 18 or 19 is much more likely. I have found 17 for you.

There are several missions for which I do not have detailed crew listings. He arrived on or about 26 Dec 44 and did not fly his first mission until 10 Jan 45, which is a very normal preparation as there was much to learn about navigation in England and over the Continent. Additionally, the pilot of the crew usually got a mission or two as copilot for another crew as a part of his orientation to combat flying.

In my own case there was an eight-day gap between arrival and my first combat mission.

There are some gaps in LeCompte's combat record that I cannot account for. Was he sick, or given some other duty? He flew most of his missions with Walter Brasch, but Brasch flew several missions with a different navigator, and LeCompte was not to be found with another pilot, except until almost the end. Records just do not exist for all the vagaries of the combat experience.

I am sorry I cannot fill in these gaps, but if letters exist to his family you might find some clues.

Just a few notes: chaff was strips of foilbacked paper which was actually tuned to the radar being used by the Germans. Packets were thrown out of American planes to jam the German raider.

: A.A is antiaircraft fire, usually by 88mm artillery, the best such piece of hardware built by anyone during WWII.

The formation sheets with a lot of scribbling and notes made by the air commander of the formation about what was happening during the mission.

On the track maps, arrows will show you in which direction the planes were flying to and from target.

Judge Donald R. Ross
Senior United States Circuit Judge
United States Court of Appeals
PO Box 307
Omaha, Nebraska 68101

November 25, 2000

Dear Judge Ross:

To reintroduce ourselves – we were the couple seated to your right at the 306th Banquet in San Diego on September 9, 2000. My wife is the niece of Lt. Robert Vieille, the pilot of the B-17G “Combined Operations” that crashed on the Isle of Man, April 14, 1945. You may remember that we are attempting to reconstruct the event so that the Vieille family might finally achieve some closure.

First off, we want to thank you for the kindness you showed us that evening. You and your wife Janice made us feel very comfortable at what was a banquet table of strangers, and throughout the evening we got the distinct feeling that you shared with us the sense of tragedy that surrounds the crash on April 24, 1945.

You may remember that, at the time we spoke, we had received only censored documents from the Air Force regarding the crash. Since then, our argument that the event was extremely important to the family convinced the Air Force to release the documents. We have enclosed a copy of the file so that you can see the official record. From our reading of the documents, it appears that Robert Vieille was flying well below the altitude he was instructed to maintain, and was off course just enough to the northeast that he hit the island.

We have also enclosed an overview summary of the event as we have reconstructed it from records as well as wartime correspondence and discussions with you and a number of other 306th veterans in San Diego last September. We would appreciate any comments, corrections or additions to it.

We are writing to you now to bring you up-to-date on what we know about the crash, and ask you to consider several questions:

- 1) Can you tell us more about Earl Kesling? You indicated at the reunion table that evening that he was a “good man.” We certainly get the feeling from the crash report and the letter he sent to Robert Vieille’s father after the war (enclosed), that he was deeply affected by the crash. We have the sense from his letter that he was saddened by the event not only because of the loss of so many friends, but because the purpose of the trip to Ireland was so light-hearted – R & R and a trip to get whiskey.
- 2) Can you place a primary purpose for the mission? That is, do you think/remember that the “whiskey run” came first and then the ferrying of passengers to Ireland, or the reverse?
- 3) How would such a “whiskey run” work? That is, who paid for it? Was a hat passed around? Was there a slush fund for such purposes?

- 4) After the banquet that evening, Mr. Thayer introduced us to George DeVack. He described the usual route taken from Thurleigh to Langford Lodge—confirmed by the flight plan that we later received from the Air Force. However, he also said that it was not that unusual for pilots crossing the Irish Sea to fly beneath the weather. He said that it was not unusual for a B-17 to be flying at 350 feet as “Combined Operations” was doing that afternoon of the weather warranted it. Does this square with your recollection?
- 5) The feel of the regular daytime briefing. How might the decision to take the trip have been made in context of the daily midday briefing? Whose idea might it have been?
- 6) What do you remember of Captains Butterfield and Cubberly? We are attempting to locate their descendants in order to get photographs of them to include in our documents. Any further thoughts on Emily Rea?
- 7) Why would the Air Corps and later the Air Force classify the crash report “Confidential”? Was it standard procedure for all such reports?

We have communicated with Russell Strong about the crash, and we spoke with him briefly in San Diego, but, he seems not to be interested. It might be that it was a non-combat accident. This is understandable, but, as we noted to you that evening, we believe that the remarkable careers of the folks aboard that plane deserve better treatment than they have received so far. Indeed, it was an accident based on a mistake in judgment. They were flying lower than instructed and off course. But that in no way diminishes the prior accomplishments of any of them.

To that end, we are working with some friends in the government of the Isle of Man to place a commemorative marker on or near the site of the crash. We are going to take some family members to the Isle of Man and the Memorial Day ceremonies at Madingly in May of 2001, but we are targeting the placement of the marker for May, 2002, at which time we hope to assemble as many descendants as possible. We are also trying to coordinate the placement with the opening of the museum at Thurleigh that we heard about at the reunion. We presently have located descendants of P/O Howard LeCompte and Lt. Collins Liersch, and we are continuing to track other descendants.

Finally, we appreciate your taking time with us on September 9. You and your wife Janice made what could have been an uncomfortable evening very pleasant. And we hope you will forgive this intrusion into your busy life about an event so long ago and far away. However, we would appreciate any thoughts or suggestions you might have.

Please give our regards to Mrs. Ross and we hope you have a Happy Holidays.

Yours truly,

Sandy Lydon and Ann Vieille Lydon
2255 Redwood Drive
Aptos, CA 95003
831-688-2374; e-mail: salydon@aol.com



Lt. Robert Vieille, pilot of "Combined Operations", April 14, 1945

The Last Flight of *Combined Operations*, Saturday, April 14, 1945

By Sandy Lydon

Note: This account has been put together using official Army Air Corps documents, cemetery records, personal letters, interviews, and published books.

The Flight- At 3:00 PM, Saturday, April 14, 1945, a B-17G named "Combined Operations" (serial number 42-37840) took off from Thurleigh Field, England destined for Langford Lodge, near Belfast, Ireland. The aircraft had a crew of five: pilot was First Lieutenant Robert A. Vieille with his co-pilot being Second Lieutenant Collins Liersch, Navigator was Howard LeCompte, Engineer was Technical Sergeant E. E. Gallion, Radio Operator was Staff Sergeant C.F. Smalczewski.

The plane also carried six passengers, including the squadron's operations officer, Captain Butterfield, the squadron's executive officer, Captain Cubberly, two of the squadron's gunnery sergeants, two other air corps personnel, and a Red Cross nurse. Prior to the aircraft taking off, the squadron Flight Surgeon, Dr. McClung unsuccessfully attempted to catch the airplane by chasing it down the runway in a jeep. Disappointed, Dr. McClung went into London for the remainder of the weekend.

The unit commander, Major Earl Kesling, later recalled briefing the crew regarding the importance of avoiding the Isle of Man, and instructing them to remain at an altitude of 6,000 feet where the weather was clear. Lt. Vieille signed a flight plan acknowledging that he would encounter weather over the Irish Sea and would fly at 5,000 feet from Thurleigh to Rhyl on the English coast, and then pass just to the southwest of the Calf of Man (a small island off the island's southwestern tip), cross over to Ardglass, Ireland and then hug the coast of Ireland to Langford Lodge. With the plane cruising at 160 miles per hour, the flight was scheduled to take two hours.

The Weather – According to a report later filed by the weather station at Ronaldsway Airfield on the southeastern coast of the Isle of Man, at 4:00 PM there was a southerly wind gusting to 31 miles per hour, it was raining lightly, and visibility over land at sea level was 2000 yards. The cloud layer was dense above 300 feet.

The Crash – At 4:10 PM, several miles off course and at 350 feet above sea level, Lt. Vieille saw land where he didn't expect it, attempted to pull the aircraft up and to the left to miss the hill, but struck the ground. The plane had been seen "flying at low altitude under the overcast just prior to crash." All four engines were running at the moment of impact. The plane skidded thirty-five yards, slammed into a stone wall and burst into flame. Hearing the crash, local residents ran to the field, but were afraid to approach too closely because the plane's ammunition was exploding in the fire. At 6:15 PM Thurleigh field was notified by Langford Lodge that the aircraft was overdue, and at 6:20 they received a telephone call that the plane had crashed on the Isle of Man. All eleven people aboard the plane perished in the crash.

The Aftermath – The following afternoon Major Earl Kesling flew to the Isle of Man to personally investigate the crash, and on Monday, April 16, 1945, Lt. Claeys flew over to the Isle of Man, retrieved the bodies, and brought them back to Thurleigh Field. All eleven were buried at the U.S. military cemetery outside Cambridge at one of the largest and most moving funerals the unit had ever seen.

The War Ends – The 306th Bomb Group flew its last combat mission over Germany April 19, 1945, and the European war ended on V-E Day, May 8, 1945.

The Airplane – B-17G serial number 42-37840 was named “Combined Operations” because it had been recycled using the front half of a Douglas-manufactured B-17 and the back half of a Boeing built plane. The Army Air Corps had officially taken the official or front half into service in September 1943. From interviews with Air Corps veterans and historians, this type of salvaging was quite common, and though the aircraft had a wry somewhat sarcastic name because of its hybrid origins, that would not make it any less airworthy. An interview with three of its surviving regular crewmembers confirmed the soundness of the airplane. It may have been careworn and shabby, they agreed, but the airplane was sound and running well when it took off on April 14. Since the crew flying to Ireland was a pick-up crew assembled of those wishing to go to Ireland, none of the airplane’s regular crew was aboard when it crashed.

The Mission of Combined Operations on April 14 – The mission stated on the crash report was “to fly practice navigation and discharge passengers at Station 597 [Langford Lodge, Ireland].” That was also the reason given to the next of kin of Howard LeCompte and Robert Vieille. Ferrying passengers for an R & R stay in Ireland was a plausible reason for the flight, but the “practice navigation” part of the mission did not make much sense. Robert Vieille, Collins Liersch and Howard LeCompte all had many combat missions to their credit. Lt. Vieille had flown a combat mission the day before, and his father, Dr. Albert Vieille wrote a letter to Major Kesling asking for an explanation: “How did it happen that he was on the Isle of Man? Was the accident a collision in foggy weather of just what happened? Was it his fault or was something wrong mechanically with the plane?” Later in 1945 Earl Kesling wrote Dr. Vieille a long letter trying to explain the reasons for the crash, but he stopped short of telling the entire story, concluding with the cryptic: “Army records do not tell the whole story.”

This past September we had an opportunity to interview not only members of the regular crew of “Combined Operations” but also several of the men who were squadron-level officers in April of 1945. To a man, when we asked about the reasons for the flight, they answered without hesitation: “Whisky run.” We asked each of them independently of the other, and the answers were all the same. Apparently, possibly in anticipation of the coming end of the war, the officers of the squadron had decided to bring a load of Irish whisky to Thurleigh. The usual practice on such excursions was to give the flight some kind of official cover – in this case, practicing navigation. Interviews with veterans of the Army Air Corps and Air Force confirmed this practice.

From all that we can reconstruct, a group of the unit’s officers decided—perhaps on the spur of the moment? (it was a Saturday afternoon) to fly over to Ireland, drop off four passengers so they could enjoy some R & R, pick up some whisky and fly back. They grabbed an available, fueled airplane and headed off for Saturday night in Belfast. One of the ironies in this tragic story is that Robert Vieille was a devout Christian Scientist, and as such did not drink alcohol.

Kesling’s Feelings About the Crash – Given the nature of the flight that he had approved, Earl Kesling was obviously quite affected by the crash, and one gets that feeling in the letter he wrote to Albert Vieille later in 1945. Further his allusions to “more to the story” give a hint of the nature of the trip, and the fact that he couldn’t really tell this father that his son had died in a flight to get whiskey in Ireland. For Kesling it was a greater tragedy than any combat deaths he had witnessed (and he said so in his letter). It was a tragedy because it was a bunch of his friends flying over to spend

Saturday night in Ireland and bring back some whiskey. It was a plane on its way to a party.

Red Cross Nurse Emily Rea – A native of Indiana, Emily Rea graduated from Hanover College in Hanover, Indiana and joined the Red Cross in early 1943. According to the officers we spoke with who were at Thurleigh Field in 1945, Emily Rea was in charge of the officers club at Bedford, and was well-liked by everyone that knew her. The outpouring of affection toward her can be seen in the flower-draped caskets,



Navigator, "Combined Operations", April 17, 1945
F/O Howard E. LeCompte and wife Sibyl LeCompte - 1944

These are the photographs taken by Howard's best friend Sgt. Robert L. Jones during the actual military funeral at the Madingly Cemetary near Cambridge.



In a letter he says that Howard's casket is the to the left of the one with all the flowers.



LeCompte family photograph

CONFIDENTIAL

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

(Brief narrative of accident. Include statement of responsibility and recommendations for action to prevent repetition)

Narrative: A/C 42-37840 took off on 14 April 1945 on a routine cross-country navigation flight at 1500 hours. Destination was Station 597 where passengers were to be discharged. At 1815 hours the A/C was reported overdue by Station 597, and a subsequent report, five minutes later revealed the A/C had crashed near Pearlwick Bay, Isle of Man.

Investigation of accident revealed the following facts:

a. The A/C was on a course of approximately 315° at an altitude of 350 feet. Weather Station 281 reported weather at time of the accident as 4/10ths to 6/10ths cloud, base 300 feet, visibility 1100 yards over sea, 2000 yards over land.

b. Pilot apparently upon observing the obstacle created by the hill, began a turn to the left. The A/C contacted the ground on a heading of 225°, crashing into a stone wall following a transverse of about 35 yards from first point of impact. All personnel were fatal casualties.

Immediate Cause: A/C hit high ground while in flight causing crash.

Underlying Cause: Pilot had violated his clearance which was for 5000 feet, and was flying at an altitude of approximately 350 feet.

Responsibility: Pilot error-100%.

Recommendations: None.

Aircraft Accident Committee

Felix M. Hardison
FELIX M. HARDISON,
Lt. Col., AC,
President, Voting Member.

Earl W. Kesling
EARL W. KESLING,
Lt. Col., AC,
Pilot, Voting Member.

James M. Venable, Jr.
JAMES M. VENABLE, JR.,
Major, AC,
Engineering Officer, Voting Member.

Arthur R. Weibe
ARTHUR R. WEIBE,
Captain, MC,
Ex-officio,
Group Surgeon Alternate.

Robert Hogg
ROBERT HOGG,
Captain, AC,
Ex-officio,
Group Intelligence Alternate.

Dalton H. Wright
DALTON H. WRIGHT,
Major, AC,
Ex-officio,
Station Weather Officer.

Kenneth Sherman
(Investigating Officer)

Capt AC
Hg 306² Bomb Sq H.

Date 3 May 1945

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STATION WEATHER OFFICE
AAF STATION 111
APO 557, U. S. ARMY

T-B-1

27 April, 1945

SUBJECT: Weather Station Hourly Weather Reports, Ronaldsway.

TO : Commanding Officer, 306th Bombardment Group (H), AAF Station 111, APO 557, U. S. Army.

1. In compliance with telephone request this date from Group Operations Office, the following report is submitted concerning the weather at Ronaldsway, Isle of Man, for 1500, 1600 and 1700 hours, DEBT, on 14 April, 1945. These reports were received from the Ronaldsway Weather Station (Station No. 281) via teletype circuit for 1500 and 1700 hours, and from Lt. Buchanan, Assistant One, MO-11, ETA, for 1600 hours.

| Weather Element | 1500 hours | 1600 hours | 1700 hours |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Color of field | red | red | red |
| Visibility (over land) | 3600 yards | 2000 yards | 2000 yards |
| Visibility over sea | 2½ miles | 1100 yards | 1100 yards |
| Base of lowest cloud | 300 feet | 300 feet | 400 feet |
| Amount of lowest cloud | 4-6/10 | 4-6/10 | 4-6/10 |
| Base of next lowest cloud layer | 1000 feet | 1000 feet | 1000 feet |
| Amount " " " " " | 10/10 | 10/10 | 10/10 |
| Type of low cloud | stratus | stratus | stratus |
| Type of middle cloud | unknown | unknown | unknown |
| Weather (at time of observation) | light inter- mittant rain | light continu- ous rain | overcast |
| Wind direction | S by E | S | S |
| Wind velocity | 26-31 mph. gusty | 26-31 mph. gusty | 26-31 mph. gusty |
| Total cloud cover | 10/10 | 10/10 | 10/10 |
| Pressure | 29.87 in. | 29.87 in. | 29.86 in. |
| Surface temperature | 51°F. | 50°F. | 50°F. |

Theodore M. Sperry

THEODORE M. SPERRY
1st Lt., A. C.
Staff Weather Officer

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306TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Flying Control Officer
A F O 557

E-1-12

26 April 1945

SUBJECT: Crash of Aircraft # 840-Y. ¹² 14 April 45 ¹⁰ To 1900

TO : Commanding Officer, 306th Bomb. Group (H), Station 111, APO 557.
(Attn: Captain Kenneth Sherman, Operations Officer)

1. At the request of Captain Sherman, Group Operations, the following report of the particulars of and subsequent action following the flight of aircraft B-17 number 840-Y, which crashed near Ronaldsway on the Isle of Man on 14 April 1945 is submitted. Attached is a photostatic copy of the clearance obtained by the pilot Lt. Vielle for the intended flight to Langford Lodge.

2. The attached clearance was typed in the 367th Squadron Operations and brought to the Control Tower by Lt. Vielle. Here the route was checked, weather and colors of the period added, and clearance was obtained from 1st Division Flying Control. The flight was authorized by Captain Nicklehoff of Group Operations.

3. It is to be noticed that the entire route was to be flown at 5,000 feet. This was emphasized by the weather officer. Also the briefed route would not take the aircraft over the Isle of Man.

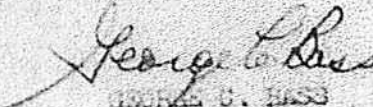
4. At 1815 hours Langford Lodge Flying Control reported the aircraft had not landed. 1st Division Flying Control was called at 1818 hours and 840 was reported to them as overdue.

5. At 1820 hours Langford Lodge Flying Control reported our aircraft 840 had crashed near Ronaldsway on the Isle of Man. There had been no survivors.

6. At 1825 hours Preston Flying Control reported the same information.

7. At 1830 hours 1st Division Flying Control was notified of above crash.

8. Subsequent information was obtained by other duty control officers. All information was passed to Group Operations.


GEORGE C. BASS
1st Lt., A.C.
F.O.C.

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306TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Flying Control Officer
A P O 557

E-K-12

26 April 1945

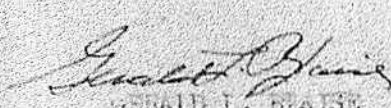
SUBJECT: Crash of Aircraft 840-Y 14 April 45

TO : Commanding Officer, 306th Bomb. Group (H), Station 111, APO 557
(Attn. Captain Kenneth Sherman, Operations Officer)

1. At 1855 hours Ronaldsway Flying Control was called for further information regarding accident of aircraft 840-Y. Flying Control reported that crash occurred approximately five miles south of Ronaldsway towards the Gulf of Man at 1630 hours. Aircraft was observed flying at low altitude under the overcast just prior to crash. Immediately on locating position Flying Control dispatched crash trucks and ambulances to scene. There was a delay reaching crash due to the difficult terrain. At the time call was made only four bodies had been removed. Ronaldsway informed us there were no survivors and they were taking complete charge for the removal of the bodies. Flying Control placed guard on crash and would keep it there until we contacted them. Above information passed on to 1st Bomb. Division and Group Operations.

2. The only personal items found were a case with the name John C. Simons and a bracelet with the engraved name Carlton.

3. At 1905 hours Langford Lodge was called to inform Col. Sutton of crash.


GERALD L. BLAISE
1st Lt., A.C.
F.C.O.

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306TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Flying Control Officer
A P O 557

E-M-12

26 April 1945

SUBJECT: Flight of Aircraft 454-T to Ronaldsway on 15 April 1945

TO : Commanding Officer, 306th Bomb. Group (H), Station 111, APO 557
(Attn: Captain Kenneth Sherman, Operations Officer)

1. Aircraft 454-T, pilot Major Kesling, was cleared to Andreas airfield to investigate crash of aircraft 840-Y. Flight was authorized by Major Cassidy, Group Operations Officer.

2. Aircraft was airborne at 1515 hours with instructions not to land if the weather was doubtful. Aircraft landed at Ronaldsway as weather was better at that field than at original destination.

William R. Carlile Jr.
WM. R. CARLILE
1st. Lt., A.C.
F.C.O.

CONFIDENTIAL
306TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Flying Control Officer
A P O 557

E-K-12

26 April 1945

SUBJECT: Clearance of Aircraft 454 to Ronaldsway, Isle of Man. 16 April 45

TO : Commanding Officer, 306th Bomb. Group (H), Station 111, APO 557.
(Attn. Captain Kenneth Sherman, Operations Officer)

1. Lt. Claeys, pilot of aircraft 454, was properly cleared through this station to Ronaldsway for the purpose of picking up the bodies that were on aircraft 840.

2. The E.T.D. from this station was 1630 hours. E.T.A. 1735 hours at Ronaldsway. His actual time of departure was 1650 hours, actual time of return to Thurleigh 2013 hours.

3. This flight was cleared through Group operations and 1st Bomb. Division.

4. Ambulances met aircraft 454 in it's dispersal to remove bodies to station hospital.

Gerold L. Blaise
GEROLD L. BLAISE
1st Lt., A.C.
F.C.O.

CONFIDENTIAL

AMERICAN RED CROSS
Continental Headquarters, APO 887, U.S. Army

April 6, 1945

Subject: Travel Orders for Miss Emily Rea, Program Director,
ARC Club Opert. Dept.

TO : RTO

From : Director Personnel

1. The above named individual will proceed on or about April 8th 1945, from this station to the United Kingdom, via Dieppe, on leave and upon completion thereof will return to this station.

Miss Rea will report her arrival in the U.K. London Headquarters and also advise that Headquarters of the date of her departure prior to leaving the United Kingdom.

2. Travel by sea, by rail and vehicle is authorized.

Providing Air transportation is voluntarily made available by Military Authorities and not at the specific official request of the American Red Cross, Miss Rea is authorized to travel by such means to destination and return.

This Travel Order does not constitute a request to travel by A.T.C. service.

/s/ Helen Reeve

for Director of Personnel

HR/mk

A TRUE COPY

Arthur R. Weibe

ARTHUR R. WEIBE,
Captain, Medical Corps.

CONFIDENTIAL

AF FORM 1-5 (REV. 11-1-44)

CONFIDENTIAL

Date 14 April 1945

AIRCRAFT CLASSIFICATION: DOMESTIC, LOCAL, CROSS COUNTRY, FLIGHT

STATION CLEARANCE: THURLEIGH Station R/T 0411 700m, 041121, 0410 and 5955 Km
B-17G 840 Thurleigh

Type of A/C A/C Number or Mark

- 1. Vi-illo, R. A. 2'nd Lt. (A) ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ (20)
- 2. Liersch, C. E. 2'nd Lt. (A) 7. Emilie Rea Am. Red Cross
- 3. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ (A) 8. Butterfield, W. B. Capt.
- 4. Jones, W. R. M/Sgt. (A) 9. Parrish, A. J. 2'nd Lt.
- 5. Anloxowski, C. P. T/Sgt. (A) 10. Staruck, wa. C. T/Sgt.

DESTINATION: Langford Lodge 1770 CHD 111 6440
LATHURIA Harp Chord

Cruising Speed 160 1500 1700 4
3440

Keeping Watch _____ Pos. _____ Res. Code Carried _____

ROUTE: Thurleigh to Rhyll to Half of Man to Ardglass to Langford Lodge---

Discharge passengers (Capt. W. B. Butterfield and Lt. A. J. Parrish) and return.
ETA Thurleigh 1900 hrs. Const out at 1645 hrs.

| STATION | LENGTH | HEIGHT | ALTITUDE | 5000 |
|----------|--------|--------|----------|------|
| Rhyll | 1546 | 5000 | 5000 | 5000 |
| Ardglass | 1625 | 5000 | 5000 | 5000 |

Nil low clouds locally becoming 4-7/10 base 1500-2000
tops 4-5000 over land and occasionally 7-10/10 base 500-1000 tops 3-4000 in
extreme W. coastal area and over water, breaking to 5-7/10 base 1000-1500 tops
4-5000 at Langford Lodge. Variable amounts of layered clouds and high cloud gen-
erally 5-8/10 medium in thin layers from 6-10000 tops 15-16000, and 5-8/10 high
base 23-25000. Visibility 2-3 miles except 1 mile or less in extreme W. England
Ireland in occasional light intermittent rain.

Windy 1 210-250 30 5000
8000 Med. ring in west dir. H. J. 1945
Pressure level 1000 1000 1000 1000

Clouds of 1000
1000 to 1000
to

George C. Jones
H. J. 1945

FIRST POINT OF IMPACT APPROX. 35 YDS TO TAIL.
AILERONS DROPPED OFF AT FIRST IMPACT.
NOSE SECTION BROKE UP AND WAS SHED

PROPELLER MARKING ON GROUND INDICATE
THAT ALL ENGINES WERE FUNCTIONING.

RIGHT OUTBOARD
WING PANEL

No. 4 ENGINE

No. 3 ENGINE

No. 1 or 2 ENGINE

WRECKAGE

PROPS DUG IN.

DIP CUT BY WING

ROADWAY

APPROX. 278 YDS

TRAIL

ROCK WALL

NINE BODIES FOUND ON NORTH SIDE OF WALL
TWO ON SOUTH.

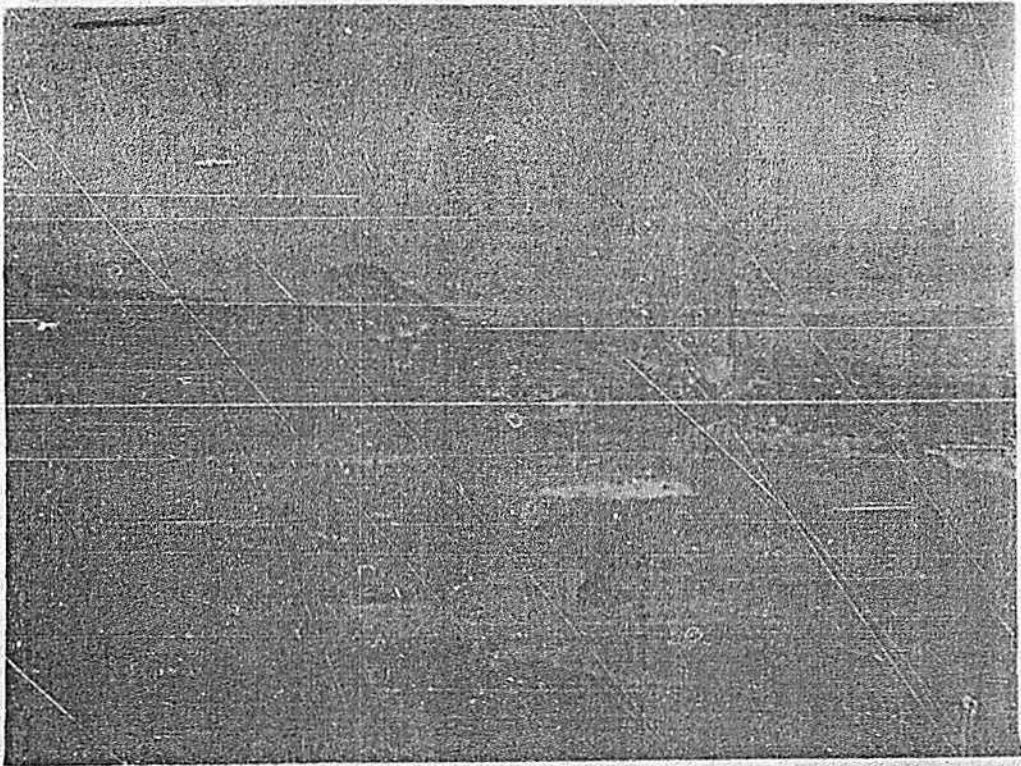
HILL APPROX. 500 FT.

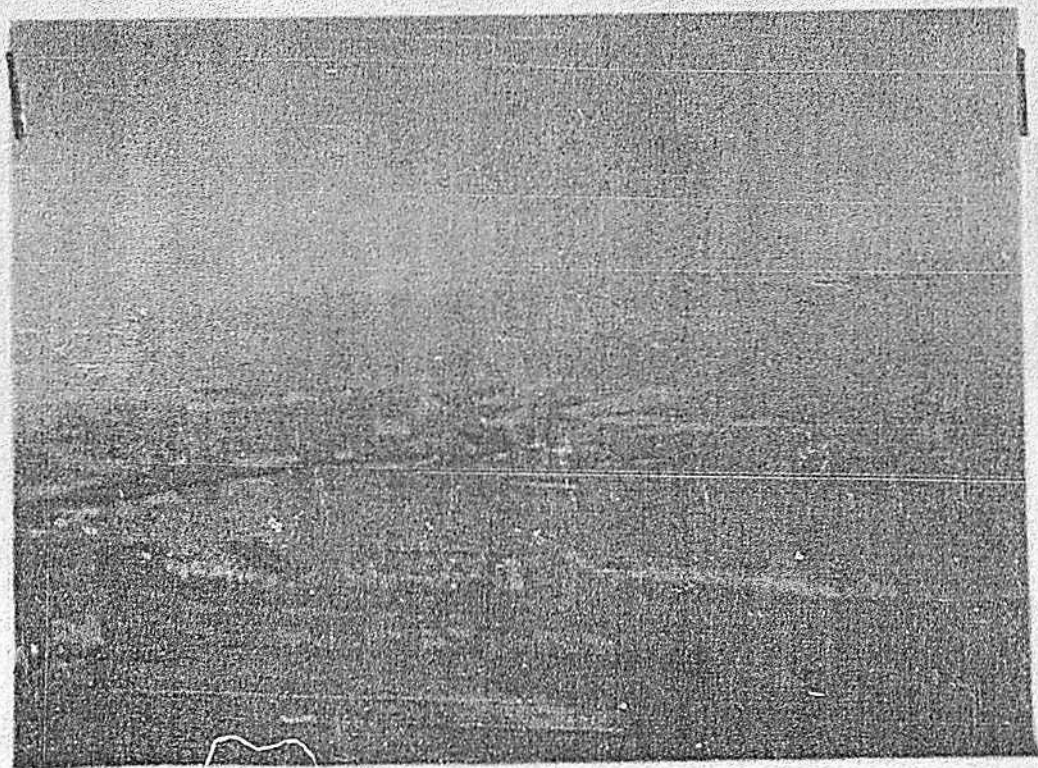
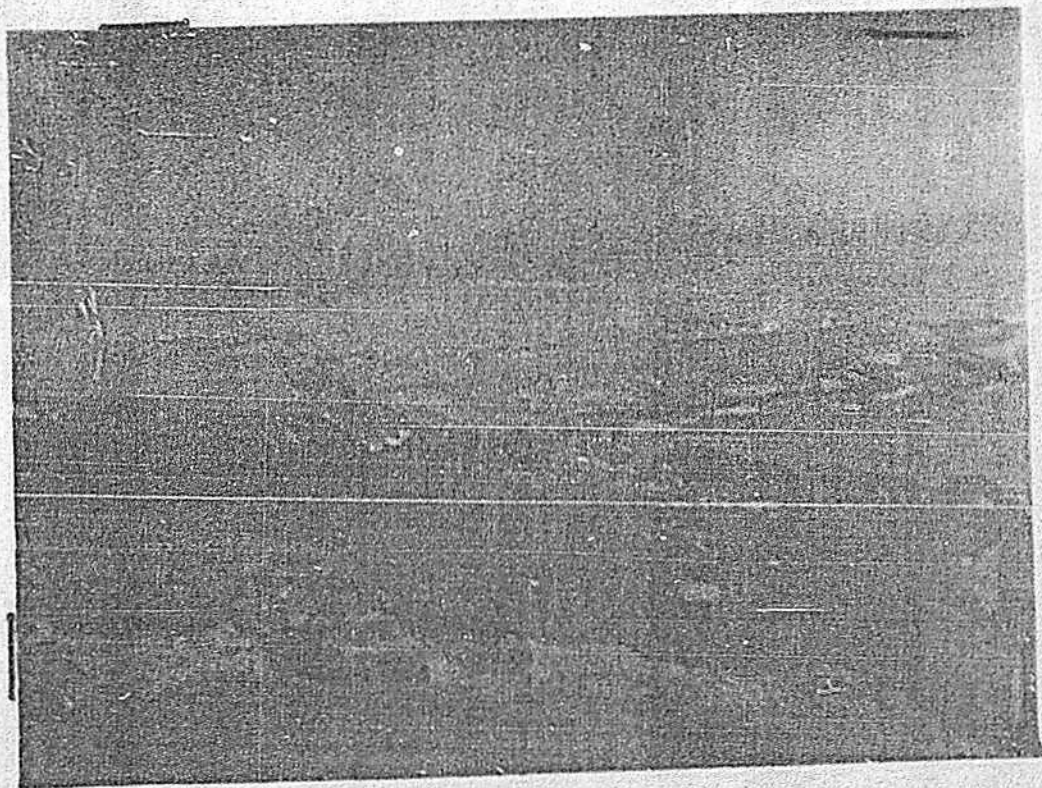
CRASH HEADING 225°
GRADE TO WEST 30° TO 35°

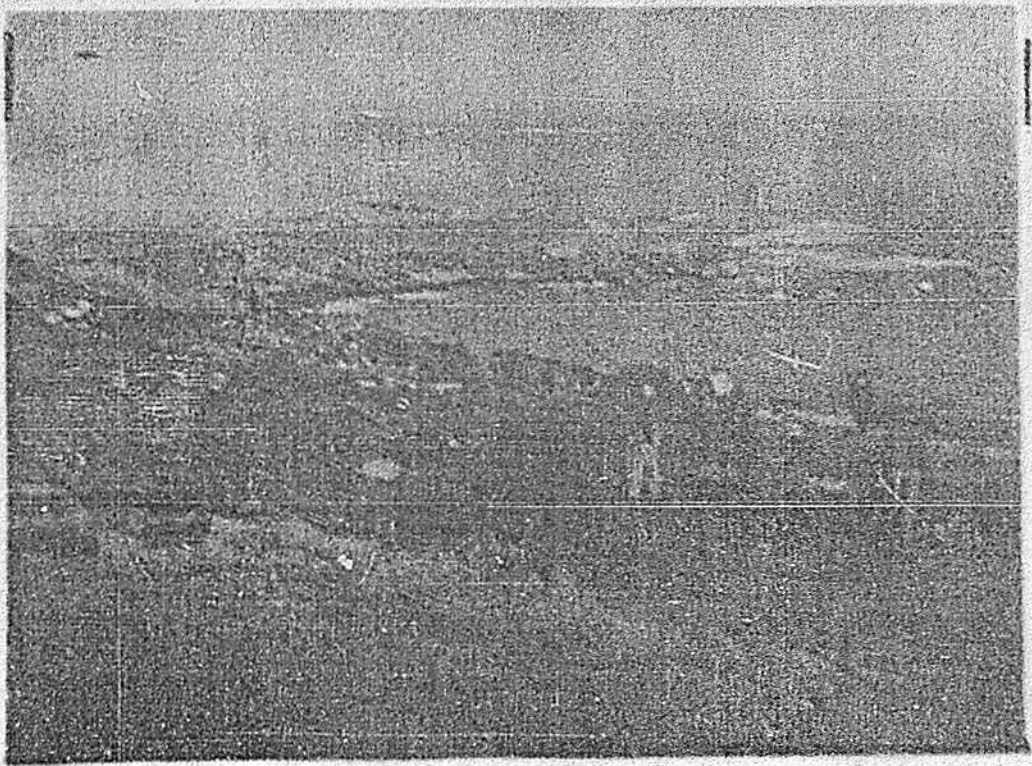
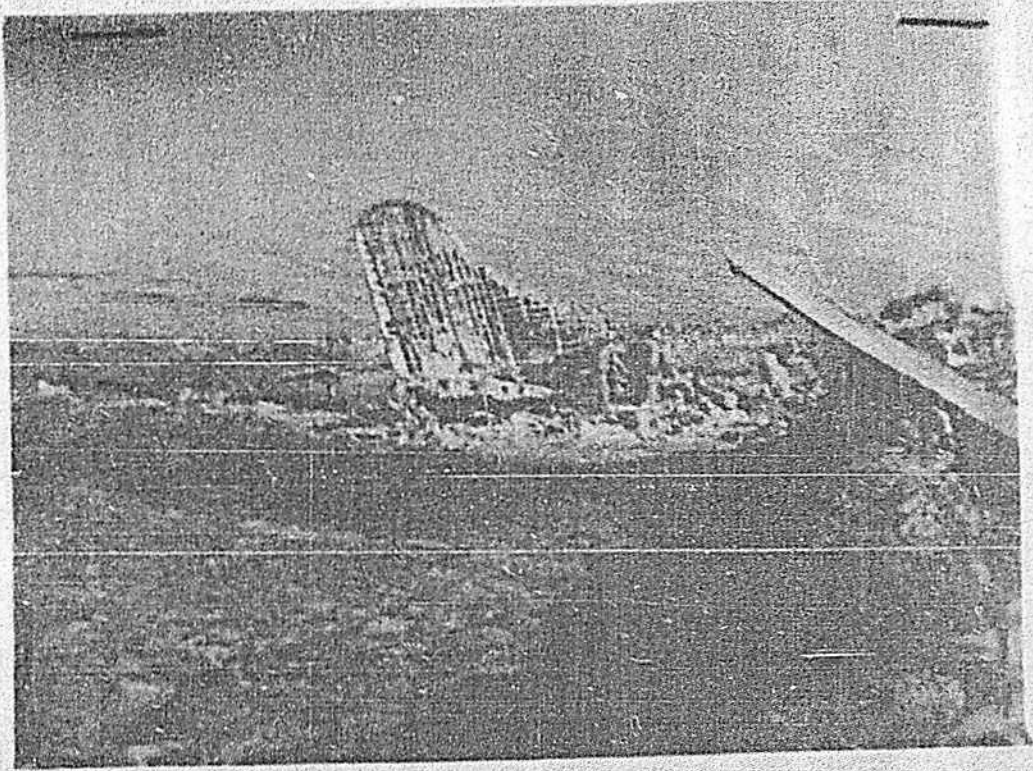
S. S. G. P. HARR

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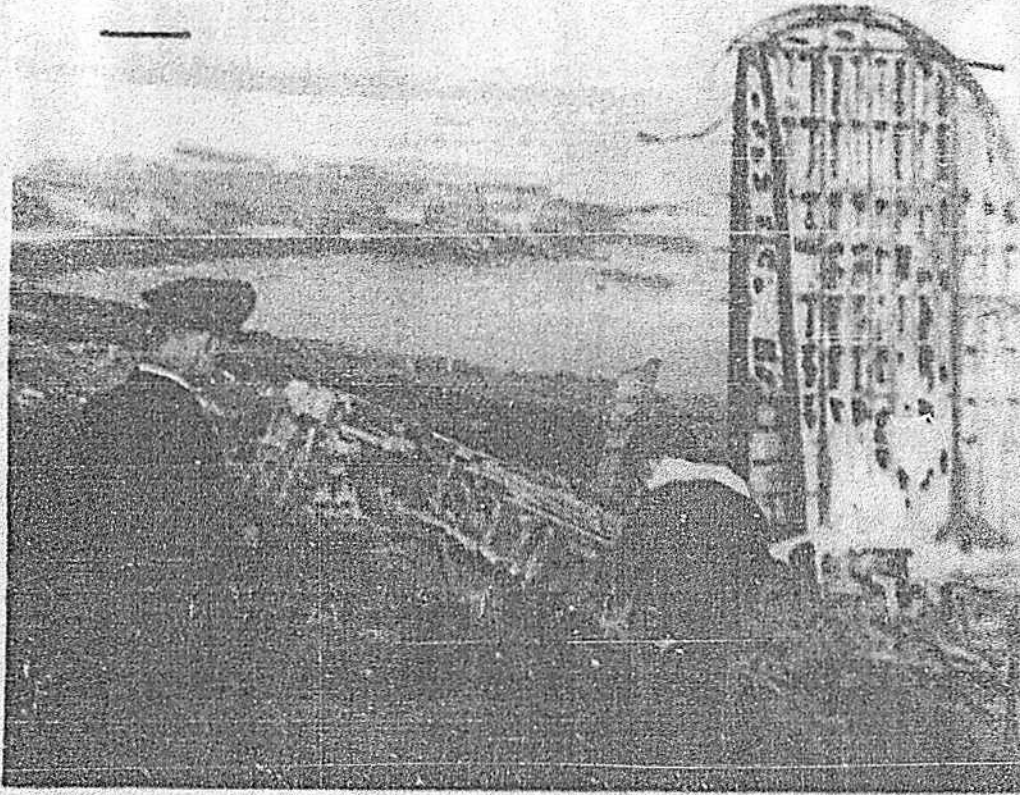
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360.33

1st W/Ind.

8-70-1

HEADQUARTERS EIGHTH AIR FORCE, APO 634, Postmaster, New York.

MAY 13 1945

To: Chief, Flying Safety, AAF, Winston-Salem 2, N.C.

1. Transmitted herewith WD AAF Form No. 14 and allied papers on the following aircraft accidents:

- a. 1st Lt. James G. Kuntz, Moa Mk XVI number NS-707
- b. 1st Lt. R. A. Vieille, B-17G number 42-57840
- c. 2nd Lt. Jenn R. Anderson, B-24J number 41-51251

2. Comment:

FOR THE COMPLAINING GENERAL:

FURNIS ARCHER

3 Incls:

As above.

CONFIDENTIAL

From: Lenco1KS@aol.com <Lenco1KS@aol.com>
To: russell.a.strong306@worldnet.att.net <russell.a.strong306@worldnet.att.net>
Date: Wednesday, April 18, 2001 7:18 PM
Subject: ORDER

I was just checking in on an order I placed in February for the 367th Diary and the "Men of the 306th". If you could please let me know your time frame on the delivery, I would greatly appreciate it.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TIME!

-Kim Sumek

Granddaughter of F/O Howard "Frenchy" LeCompte

306th BG - 367th BS - died April 14, 1945

4/18/01