

by E. M. MUENCH, Capt.
Date OCT 15 1945

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.

AAF Station

1. ORGANIZATION: Location, by Name 111 ; Command or Air Force 8th
Group 306th Bomb (H) Squadron 423rd Bomb (H) ~~Regiment~~
2. SPECIFY: Place of Departure Thurleigh, Eng; Course as prescribed
Target or Intended Destination Hanover; Type of Mission Heavy Bomb
3. WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED:
Weather was clear with excellent visibility
4. GIVE: (a) Day 22 Month Oct Year 44; Time 1222; and Location Over North Sea
of last known whereabouts of missing aircraft.
(b) Specify whether aircraft was last sighted (); Last contacted by radio (); Forced down (); Seen to Crash (x); or Information not Available ()
5. 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 collided in air with another of the same formation
6. AIRCRAFT: Type, Model and Series B-17-G ; AAF Serial Number 44-8099
7. NICKNAME OF AIRCRAFT, if any None
8. ENGINES: Type, Model and Series R-1820-97 ; AAF Serial Number (a) SW-018946 ; (b) SW-018953 ; (c) SW-019013 ; (d) SW-018964
9. INSTALLED WEAPONS (Furnish below Make, Type and Serial Number);
(a) B-1308656 ; (b) B-1308781 ; (c) HS-1158762 ; (d) S-1156006 ;
(e) B-1308603 ; (f) B-1308664 ; (g) BLC-1543186 ; (h) BLC-1543190 ;
(i) B-1308702 ; (j) B-1308663 ; (k) _____ ; (l) _____ ;
(m) _____ ; (n) _____ ; (o) _____ ; (p) _____
10. THE PERSONS LISTED BELOW WERE REPORTED AS: (a) Battle Casualty
or (b) ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~
11. NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew 10 ; Passengers 0 ; Total 10
(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.)

* Hospitalized at Station 111.
Dispensary AAF Station 111.

| Crew Position | Name in Full (Last Name First) | Rank | Serial Number | Current Status |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <u>KIA</u> 1. Pilot-Pilot | <u>Alyea, Harry J., Jr.</u> | <u>1st Lt</u> | <u>0-682757</u> | <u>MIA</u> |
| <u>KIA</u> 2. Pilot-Co-Pilot | <u>McKee, William C. III</u> | <u>Capt.</u> | <u>0-759386</u> | <u>MIA</u> |
| <u>KIA</u> 3. Navigator-Handler | <u>Handler, Charles F.</u> | <u>1st Lt</u> | <u>0-719941</u> | <u>KIA</u> |
| <u>KIA</u> 4. Bombardier-Nose Gun | <u>Mueller, Charles E.</u> | <u>1st Lt</u> | <u>0-769171</u> | <u>MIA</u> |
| <u>KIA</u> 5. Aer. Gun-Top Turr Gun | <u>Terry, Gilbert H.</u> | <u>T/Sgt</u> | <u>12145778</u> | <u>MIA</u> |
| <u>KIA</u> 6. Radio Opr-Radio Opr | <u>Coleman, Donald W.</u> | <u>S/Sgt</u> | <u>59129086</u> | <u>KIA</u> |
| <u>KIA</u> 7. Aer. Gun-Ball Turr Gun | <u>Tapps, Robert P. M.</u> | <u>S/Sgt</u> | <u>17146753</u> | <u>MIA</u> |
| <u>KIA</u> 8. Radio Opr-Waist Gun | <u>O'Brien, Vincent E.</u> | <u>S/Sgt</u> | <u>36557569</u> | <u>MIA</u> |
| <u>EU</u> 9. Aer. Gun-Tail Gun | <u>Key, Hastings S.</u> | <u>S/Sgt</u> | <u>18058552</u> | <u>MIA</u> |
| <u>KIA</u> 10. Radar Navigator | <u>Layfield, Raymond L.</u> | <u>2nd Lt</u> | <u>0-716478</u> | <u>MIA</u> |

12. IDENTIFY BELOW THOSE PERSONS WHO ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE LAST KNOWLEDGE OF AIRCRAFT, AND CHECK APPROPRIATE COLUMN TO INDICATE BASIS FOR SAME:

Check Only One Column

| Name in Full (Last Name First) | Rank | Serial Number | Contacted by Radio | Last Sighted | Saw Crash | Forced Landing |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. <u>Brown, Harold (NMI)</u> | <u>1st Lt.</u> | <u>0-764201</u> | | <u>X</u> | | |
| 2. _____ | | | | | | |
| 3. _____ | | | | | | |

B-Buffalo
HS-High Standard

(Over)

GROUP 306th Bomb Gr (H)SQ 423 Bomb Sq/C No. 44-8099 MISSION DATE 22/10/44

FIRST PILOT HARRY J. ALYEA, Jr. 1st Lt. O-682757 DESTINATION Hanover.
NAME RANK ASN

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

- (a) By coordinates App. 5250N-0223E
- (b) Approximate altitude 12,000 feet
- (c) Last noted heading Crashed into Sea
- (d) If out of formation, approximate distance from formation See No. 7

2. Describe enemy opposition (intensity of flak, intensity and method of enemy fighter attack, etc.; with particular reference to missing A/C)

None

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

Aircraft was seen to go into spin after colliding with another in same formation

4. If aircraft was out of control describe appearance:

See No. 3

(over)

Incl #1

5. If distressed aircraft was out of formation was it last seen with escort? No 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)

2 to 5 parachutes observed from collision.

7. Any other remarks not covered by above:

Aircraft No. 44-8099, Pilot Alyea, flying in lead position of high Squadron, collided with aircraft flying in #4 position of high Squadron, Pilot Mathis, and both planes went down with several crews reporting 5 chutes. At the time of the accident weather was clear, visibility was excellent, and formation was good. The lead aircraft reduced speed while in gradual climb, as evidenced by radio conversation between lead aircraft and Lt H. Brown (witness) (see below)

8. Date of report 26 Oct., 1944.

| <u>EYE-WITNESSES:</u> | <u>NAME</u> | <u>RANK</u> | <u>ASN</u> | <u>A/C No.</u> |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. | <u>BROWN, HAROLD (NMI)</u> | <u>1st Lt</u> | <u>0-764201</u> | <u>43-37598</u> |
| 2. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 3. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

INTERROGATING OFFICER (Sign Original and on copy):

| | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| <u>John M. Kavanaugh</u> | <u>Captain</u> | <u>0-578133</u> | <u>S-2 Officer.</u> |
| <u>NAME</u> | <u>RANK</u> | <u>ASN</u> | <u>DUTY</u> |
| <u>JOHN M. KAVANAUGH,</u> | | | |

Remarks cont'd--the latter asking the lead Pilot what his airspeed was and Lt Alyea replying 140 mph. At about this time Mathis' aircraft overran, slid ahead and under Alyea's aircraft. Mathis' aircraft held this position without losing altitude or making any attempt to clear. For about 10 seconds planes remained together then collided. Air Sea Rescue picked up three men from Lt Alyea's crew. 1st Lt Charles F. Handler, 0-719941, and S/Sgt Donald W. Coleman, 39129086, who were dead, and S/Sgt Hastings S. Key, 18058352, who is still alive and statement of Sgt Key is attached hereto.

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1655DX
HEADQUARTERS 306TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Intelligence Officer
United States Forces

APO 557,
26 October, 1944.

SUBJECT: Eye Witness Account of survivor of collision on
22 October, 1944.

TO : Commanding General, Hq. 1st Bombardment Division, APO 557.

1. According to Staff Sergeant HASTINGS S. KEY, 18058352, Tail Gunner and only known survivor of the collision on 22 October, 1944, Aircraft Nos. 44-8099, and 43-37976, the following is what occurred;

S/Sgt Key states that he has no knowledge of how the collision came about. All he remembers is being in the air with his parachute partially on and subsequently in the water. He states that while in the water he observed two to four (he is not sure of number) parachutes in the air--probably the Navigator, 1st Lt Charles F. Handler, O-719941, and the Radio Operator, S/Sgt Donald W. Coleman, 39129086, whose bodies were recovered. It is Sgt Key's opinion that there could not possibly be any more survivors.

John M. Kavanaugh
JOHN M. KAVANAUGH,
Captain, Air Corps,
Asst. S-2 Officer.

Incl # 2'