

**WAR DEPARTMENT  
HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES  
WASHINGTON**

**The MISSING AIR CREW REPORT**

**10490**

IMPORTANT: This report will be compiled in triplicate by each Army Air Forces organization within 48 hours of the time an aircraft is officially reported missing.

1. ORGANIZATION: Location Torretta, Italy Command or Air Force 15<sup>th</sup> AF  
Group 461<sup>st</sup> Bomb Gp (H) Squadron 765<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq (H)

2. SPECIFY: Place of departure Torretta Field, Italy Course Direct to target  
Target Blechhammer, Germany Type of mission Bombing

3. WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED:  
Scattered clouds going up, 5/10 coverage at target, scattered clouds coming back

4. GIVE: [a] Date 20 Nov 1944 Time 1420 Last known position In vicinity of Lake Balaton, Hungary.

[b] Specify whether:  Last sighted,  Forced down,  Seen to crash,  
 Last contacted by radio,  No information

5. AIRCRAFT [LOST] [BELIEVED LOST] AS A RESULT OF: [Check one only]

Enemy aircraft,  Enemy anti-aircraft,  Other Gas leak in one of left wing tanks.

6. AIRCRAFT: Type, model & series B-24 J AAF Serial Number 44-41162

7. NICKNAME OF AIRCRAFT: None

8. ENGINES: Type, model & series P&W R1830-65A AAF serial Number [a] BB-443727  
[b] BB-442590 [c] BB-443710 [d] BB-443659

9. INSTALLED WEAPONS: [Make, type and serial number]

[a] <u>1202269</u>	[e] <u>1202293</u>	[i] <u>441162</u>
[b] <u>1201991</u>	[f] <u>12011928</u>	[j] <u>1255604</u>
[c] <u>1558831</u>	[g] <u>1253902</u>	
[d] <u>155827</u>	[h] <u>1253899</u>	

10. PERSONNEL LISTED BELOW REPORTED AS:  Battle Casualty,  Non Battle Casualty

11. NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew 11; Passengers 0; Total 11

[If more than 12 persons aboard aircraft, use separate sheet]

CREW POSITION	FULL NAME [Last, First, Initial] RANK, SERIAL NUMBER	CURRENT STATUS	NEXT OF KIN, RELATIONSHIP AND ADDRESS
[1] Pilot	<b>Hughes, Arthur L., 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt.</b> <b>0-771034</b>	MIA	<b>Mrs. Cora May Hughes (Mother)</b> <b>320 Marys St., San Marcos, Texas</b>
[2] Co-pilot	<b>Wager, Leonard W., 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt.</b> <b>0-779021</b>	MIA	<b>Mr. Leonard Wager (Father)</b> <b>1121 Highland Ave., Bremerton, Wash.</b>
[3] Nav	<b>Hart, William C., F/O</b> <b>T-2001569</b>	MIA	<b>Mrs. Anita Hart (Mother)</b> <b>8940 210<sup>th</sup> Place, Queens Village, N.Y.</b>
[4] Bomb	<b>Boles, Bates (NMI), 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt.</b> <b>0-717728</b>	MIA	<b>Mrs. Mary E. Boles (Mother)</b> <b>Devol, Oklahoma</b>
[5] TG	<b>Bryant, Joe R., Cpl.</b> <b>14200047</b>	MIA	<b>Mrs. Genie S. Bryant (Mother)</b> <b>Route #2, Woodlawn, Tenn.</b>
[6] NTG	<b>Boyce, Wayne W., Cpl.</b> <b>37540335</b>	MIA	<b>Mr. Marvin F. Boyce (Father)</b> <b>Route #4, McPherson, Kansas</b>
[7] TTG	<b>Large, Dewey E., Cpl.</b> <b>14100062</b>	MIA	<b>Mrs. Flora L. Large (Mother)</b> <b>Route #4, Sevierville, Tenn.</b>
[8] BTG	<b>Meifert, Douglas (NMI), Cpl.</b> <b>16132363</b>	MIA	<b>Mr. Robert Meifert (Brother)</b> <b>1410 S. 4<sup>th</sup> St., Milwaukee, Wis.</b>
[9] RWG	<b>Scanlon, Robert L., Cpl.</b> <b>16176741</b>	MIA	<b>Mrs. May Scanlon (Mother)</b> <b>2381 Casper Ave., Detroit, Mich.</b>
[10] LWG	<b>Bettinger, Arthur W., Cpl.</b> <b>32675866</b>	MIA	<b>Mrs. Ida T. Brown (Mother)</b> <b>453 Pardee Rd., Rochester, New York</b>



HEADQUARTERS  
765<sup>TH</sup> BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF  
APO 520

16 December 1944

STATEMENT

Soon after leaving the target Lt. Hughes' airplane began siphoning gas from one of the left wing tanks. Every member of the flight tried to establish radio contact with him but failed. I tried to contact him at least three times on every transmitter I had in my ship but was unable to do so.

Approximately one hour and a half after the target one of the ships succeeded in establishing radio contact with Lt. Hughes who acknowledged the message and checked his gas supply. Finding it low he established radio contact again with a ship in the flight and told him he was leaving the flight and was going to try to make Vis.

This is the last contact I know of that was made with him. I believe at that time we were in the vicinity of Lake Balaton, Hungary.

/s/ Robert T. Chalmers  
Capt., Air Corps  
765<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq (H)

STATEMENT

Approximately thirty minutes after leaving the target, members of my flight called Lt. Hughes to tell him he had a gas leak. Each member of the flight called but none succeeded in contacting him. Forty-five minutes later Lt. Hughes called me and I informed him he had a gas leak. He called back in a few minutes and told me he was leaving the formation and would try to reach Vis. I could not contact him again and tell him that my flight would escort him to Vis.

/s/ Leo F. Cooper  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt., Air Corps  
765<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq (H)

## CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your name Boles, Bates Rank 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Serial No. 0-717728.
2. Organization 461<sup>st</sup> Gp Commander Rank Col Sqn CO Baker Rank Major
3. What year 1944 month Nov day 20 did you go down?
4. What was the mission, bombing, target, Blechhammer South Oil Ref, target time, 1130, altitude, 26,000 ft route scheduled, , route flown.
5. Where were you when you left formation? Near Lake Balaton.
6. Did you bail out? Yes.
7. Did other members of crew bail out? Yes.
8. Tell all you know about when, where, how each person in your aircraft for whom no individual questionnaire is attached bailed out. A crew list is attached. Please give facts. If you don't know, say: "No knowledge". Everyone was accounted for.
9. Where did your aircraft strike the ground? Near Canesnica, Yugoslavia.
10. What members of your crew were in the aircraft when it struck the ground? (Should cross check with 8 above and individual questionnaires) None were left in aircraft.
11. Where were they in aircraft?.
12. What was their condition? .
13. When, where, and in what condition did you last see any members not already described above? Left 3 crew members I Rumania in the hospital but later I heard they came out OK.
- 14 Please give any similar information on personnel of any other crew of which you have knowledge. Indicate source of information. Know of several incidents but like evidence as to name and places to make it worth while to repeat here.

INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of crew member: **Boles, Bates**

Rank: **2<sup>nd</sup> Lt.**

Serial number: **0-717728**

Position: Crew (Bomber) **Bombardier**

Did he bail out? **Yes.**

Where? **Near Caczna, Yugoslavia.**

If not, why not?

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

Was he injured? **No – shaken up.**

Where was he when last seen? **Returned to States.**

Any hearsay information: .

Source:

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

Total number of missions of above crew member: **2**

Dates and destinations if possible: **18 Nov – Villafranca, Italy; 20 Nov. – Blachhammer, Germany.**

INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of crew member: **Hart, William C.**

Rank: **F/O**

Serial number: **T-2001569**

Position: Crew (Bomber) **Navigator**

Did he bail out? **Yes.**

Where? **Near Caczma, Yugoslavia.**

If not, why not?

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

Was he injured? **Slight head injury.**

Where was he when last seen? **Returned to States.**

Any hearsay information: **;**

Source:

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

Total number of missions of above crew member: **2**

Dates and destinations if possible: **18 Nov – Villafranca, Italy; 20 Nov. – Blachhammer, Germany.**

INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of crew member: **Wager, Leonard W.**

Rank: **2<sup>nd</sup> Lt.**

Serial number: **0-779021**

Position: Crew (Bomber) **Co-pilot**

Did he bail out? **Yes.**

Where? **Near Caczna, Yugoslavia.**

If not, why not?

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

Was he injured? **No.**

Where was he when last seen? **Returned to States.**

Any hearsay information: **;**

Source:

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

Total number of missions of above crew member: **1.**

Dates and destinations if possible: **20 Nov. – Blachhammer, Germany.**

INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of crew member: **Hughes, Arthur**

Rank: **2<sup>nd</sup> Lt.**

Serial number: **0-771034**

Position: Crew (Bomber) **Pilot**

Did he bail out? **Yes.**

Where? **Near Caczna, Yugoslavia.**

If not, why not?

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

Was he injured? **No – shaken up.**

Where was he when last seen? **Returned to States.**

Any hearsay information: .

Source:

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

Total number of missions of above crew member: **3**

Dates and destinations if possible: **?? – Munich, Germany; 18 Nov – Villafranca, Italy; 20 Nov. – Blachhammer, Germany.**



## CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your name **Boyce, Wayne W.** Rank **Sgt.** Serial No. **37540335**
2. Organization **461<sup>st</sup> Gp Commander Rank Sqn CO Baker Rank Major.**
3. What year **1944** month **Nov** day **20** did you go down?
4. What was the mission, **bombing**, target, **Blachhammer, Germany**, target time, , altitude, **24,000 ft** route scheduled, , route flown.
5. Where were you when you left formation? **Lake Balaton, Hungary.**
6. Did you bail out? **Yes.**
7. Did other members of crew bail out? **Entire crew.**
8. Tell all you know about when, where, how each person in your aircraft for whom no individual questionnaire is attached bailed out. A crew list is attached. Please give facts. If you don't know, say: "No knowledge". **Crew bailed out near Caczma, Yugoslavia. All members reached ground in good condition.**
9. Where did your aircraft strike the ground? **Approx. 30 miles from Caczma, Yugoslavia.**
10. What members of your crew were in the aircraft when it struck the ground? (Should cross check with 8 above and individual questionnaires) **None.**
11. Where were they in aircraft?.
12. What was their condition? .
13. When, where, and in what condition did you last see any members not already described above? **Entire crew intact to Bucharest, Rumania.**
- 14 Please give any similar information on personnel of any other crew of which you have knowledge. Indicate source of information. .

## CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your name Bryant, Joe R. Rank Cpl. Serial No. 14200047
2. Organization 461<sup>st</sup> Gp Commander Lawhon Rank Col. Sqn CO Baker Rank Major.
3. What year 1944 month Nov day 20 did you go down?
4. What was the mission, oil refinery, target, Blachhammer, Germany, target time, noon, altitude, 26,000 ft route scheduled, , route flown.
5. Where were you when you left formation? Approximately an hour after leaving the target.
6. Did you bail out? Yes.
7. Did other members of crew bail out? Yes, the complete crew.
8. Tell all you know about when, where, how each person in your aircraft for whom no individual questionnaire is attached bailed out. A crew list is attached. Please give facts. If you don't know, say: "No knowledge". Wayne Boyce – first out of back of ship, Joe Bryant 2<sup>nd</sup>; Douglas Meifert 3<sup>rd</sup>; Art Bettinger 4<sup>th</sup>; No knowledge of Wager, Hughes, Scanlon, Large and Shaffer.
9. Where did your aircraft strike the ground? We were taken by partisans that it struck about 6 miles SE of Garensnica, Yugoslavia.
10. What members of your crew were in the aircraft when it struck the ground? (Should cross check with 8 above and individual questionnaires) None.
11. Where were they in aircraft?;
12. What was their condition? ;
13. When, where, and in what condition did you last see any members not already described above?
- 14 Please give any similar information on personnel of any other crew of which you have knowledge. Indicate source of information. We all got back to our Group in one piece. There were no casualties. Please investigate the records of Intelligence and see if the crew could be awarded the Air Medal. Intelligence has the complete story – Maj. Robert K. Baker, the Sqd. CO would not award the crew or any one of us the Air Metal because we didn't have a certain amount of missions. Why was this metal only awarded when a certain amount of missions were completed? Lots of guys deserve it that never got but one or two missions. They had a much tougher time and also did as much as lots of guys with 10 missions or their 35. Please investigate.

<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Leonard W. Wager</b>	<b>Mr. Leonard Wager (Father) 1121 Highland Avenue Bremerton, Washington</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Arthur L. Hughes</b>	<b>Mrs. Cora M. Hughes (Mother) 320 Marys Street San Marcos, Texas</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Bates Boles</b>	<b>Mrs. Mary Etta Boles (Mother) Rural Route Number A Devol, Oklahoma</b>
<b>F/O William O. Hart</b>	<b>Mrs. Anita Oalombot (Mother) 5940 210 Place Queens Village, New York</b>
<b>S/Sgt. Dorance R. Shaffer</b>	<b>Mrs. Ella M. Shaffer (Mother) 115 North Plaza Avenue Dayton, Ohio</b>
<b>Cpl. Arthur W. Bettinger</b>	<b>Mrs. Ida T. Brown (Mother) 432 Tardee Road Rochester, New York</b>
<b>Cpl. Robert L. Scanlon</b>	<b>Mrs. May F. Scanlon (Mother) 2381 Casper Avenue Detroit, Michigan</b>
<b>Cpm. Douglas Meifert</b>	<b>Miss Betty J. Shelton (Friend) 4436 Margaretta Avenue Saint Louis, Missouri</b>
<b>Cpl. Dewey E. Large</b>	<b>Mrs. Flora L. Large (Mother) Route #4 Sedverville, Tennessee</b>
<b>Cpl. Wayne W. Boyce</b>	<b>Mrs. Ruth E. Boyce (Wife) Route #1 Deshler, Nebraska</b>
<b>Cpl. Joe R. Bryant</b>	<b>Mrs. Genie S. Bryant (mother) Route #2 Woodlawn, Tennessee</b>