

**WAR DEPARTMENT  
HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES  
WASHINGTON**

**The MISSING AIR CREW REPORT**

**10494**

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 767<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq (H)
2. SPECIFY: Place of departure Torretta, Italy Course \_\_\_\_\_  
Target Brux, Germany Type of mission Combat
3. WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED:  
8/10 cumulus at 1700 feet
4. GIVE: [a] Date 16 Dec 1944 Time 1400 Last known position Trieste, Italy  
[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 .
6. AIRCRAFT: Type, model & series B-24 J AAF Serial Number 42-51922
7. NICKNAME OF AIRCRAFT: None
8. ENGINES: Type, model & series P&W R-1830-65 AAF serial Number [a] CP-328148  
[b] CP-328247 [c] CP-328100 [d] CP-328237
9. INSTALLED WEAPONS: [Make, type and serial number] All Browning Cal. 50

[a] <u>RU 1033942</u>	[e] <u>LB 1038068</u>	[i] <u>LT 1038087</u>
[b] <u>LN 1037903</u>	[f] <u>RB 1030853</u>	[j] <u>RT 1034174</u>
[c] <u>RN 1037878</u>	[g] <u>LW 1316896</u>	
[d] <u>LU 1033943</u>	[h] <u>RW 1316707</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	Ward, Jr., Lee P., 1 <sup>st</sup> Lt. 0-664430	MIA	Mr. Lee P. Ward, Sr. (Father) 912 Fisher Street, Houston, Texas
[2] Co-pilot	Merkouris, Thomas M., 2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt. 0-824162	MIA	Mr. Michael Merkouris (Father) 6 Vroom Street, Jersey City, New Jersey
[3] Bomb	Merry, Kenneth E., F/O T-127802	MIA	Mrs. Elizabeth A. Merry (Wife) 905 Chestnut, Emporia, Kansas
[4] Nav	Mundy, Charles E., 2 <sup>nd</sup> Lt. 0-2063458	MIA	Mrs. Marion L. Mundy (Wife) 253 No. Main Street, Tucson, Arizona
[5] LWG	MacDonald, Thomas H., Cpl. 31221201	MIA	Mrs. Alice MacDonald (Mother) 21 Garfield Street, Madison, Maine
[6] RWG	Haggerty, Paul T., Cpl. 31310455	MIA	Mrs. Ann Haggerty (Mother) 147 Osborn Street, Fall River, Mass.
[7] NTG	Byers, Thomas F., Cpl. 33714183	MIA	Dorothy L. Byers (Wife) R.D. #1, Saxonburg, Pennsylvania
[8] TTG	TenHaken, Melvin G., Cpl. 36726670	MIA	Mrs. Anna TenHaken (Mother) Oostburg, Wisconsin
[9] BTG	Palmer, Jesse H., Jr., T/Sgt. 6934540	MIA	Mr. Holly H. Palmer (Father) c/o Police Dept., Kansas City, Kansas
[10] TTG	Wakefield, R. C., Cpl. 14190769	MIA	Mrs. Coy W. Wakefield (Mother) Route #2, Double Springs, Alabama
[11] Photo	Dunham, Harry W., T/Sgt. 6980505	MIA	Mr. Floyd Dunham (Father) Upper Lisle, New York

[12]

12. IDENTIFY BELOW THOSE PERSONS WHO ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE LAST KNOWLEDGE OF AIRCRAFT AND CHECK APPROPRAITE [one only] COLUMN TO INDICATE BASIS FOR SAME:

NAME IN FULL	RANK	SERIAL No.	CONTACTED BY RADIO	LAST SIGHTED	SAW CRASH	SAW FORCED LANDING
[1] <b>Walter A. Bridewell</b>	<b>Cpl.</b>	<b>18242623</b>		<b>X</b>		
[2]						
[3]						

13. IF PERSONNEL ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE SURVIVED, CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

Parachutes were used,  Persons were seen walking away from the scene of the crash,

Other reasons [specify].

14. ATTACH PHOTOGRAPH, MAP OR SKETCH SHOWING LAST KNOWN LOCATION OF AIRCRAFT.  
15. ATTACH EYEWITNESS DESCRIPTIONS OF CRASH, FORCED LANDING, OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES.  
16. ATTACH A DESCRIPTION OF EXTENT OF SEARCH, IF ANY, AND GIVE NAME, RANK AND SERIAL NUMBER OF OFFICER IN CHARGE OF SEARCH HERE:.

Date: **19 Dec 44**

/s/ Robert A. Preciado  
Capt., AC

766TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)  
461ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP  
APO 520 US ARMY

STATEMENT

Over the target ship number 41 was reported to have three engines smoking. About 45 minutes or an hour after leaving the target, ship #41 fell out of formation and was holding altitude but was wandering all around the formation. Aircraft #46 and 44 then returned to our formation. We were then at 17,500 feet. Aircraft #41 was approximately 1,500 to 2,000 feet below us. I was watching it all the while and noticed parachutes. I counted seven (7) parachutes. The plane seemed under control but was gradually losing altitude. It went into the undercast as I saw the seventh parachute. It was still flying under control. I reported the crew having bailed out and the navigator said that we were near Trieste, Italy.

/s/ Walter A. Bridewell, Jr.  
Corporal, 18242623.

REPORT ON SHOT-DOWN AIRCRAFT

DATE AND TIME AIRCRAFT WAS SHOT DOWN      **16 December 1944,**    CASUALTY NO. **ME-2555**  
PLACE OF CRASH      **Croatia, not far from the Italian border**  
TYPE OF AIRCRAFT    **Liberator**  
REPORTING OFFICE    **Air-Base-Headquarters Laibach**

NAME	RANK	SERIAL NUMBER	CAPT'D WOUNDED DEAD	PLACE OF INTERMENT
<b>TenHaken, Melvin Gerrit</b> <b>7 May 1924 U.S.A.</b>	<b>Cpl.</b>	<b>36826670</b>	<b>Captured</b>	<b>Dulag-Luft West</b>
<b>Wakefield, R. C.</b> <b>9 Aug 1925 Double Springs,</b> <b>Ala.</b>	<b>Cpl.</b>	<b>14190769</b>	<b>Captured</b>	<b>Dulag-Luft West</b>
<b>Haggerty, Paul Thomas</b> <b>19 Feb 1925 Fall River, Mass.</b>	<b>Cpl.</b>	<b>31310455</b>	<b>Captured</b>	<b>Dulag-Luft West</b>
<b>Merry, Kenneth Eugene</b>	<b>F/O</b>	<b>T-128702</b>	<b>Captured</b>	<b>Dulag-Luft West</b>
<b>Palmer, Jesse Harland</b> <b>15 Feb 1916 Kans</b>	<b>T/Sgt.</b>	<b>6934540</b>	<b>Captured</b>	<b>Dulag-Luft West</b>
<b>Mac Donald, Thomas Handley</b> <b>22 Aug 1921 Anson, Me.</b>	<b>Cpl.</b>	<b>31221201</b>	<b>Captured</b>	<b>Dulag-Luft West</b>
<b>Byers, Thomas Frasier</b> <b>14 Nov 1920 Butler, Pa.</b>	<b>Cpl.</b>	<b>33714183</b>	<b>Captured</b>	<b>Dulag-Luft West</b>
<b>Dunham, Harry William</b> <b>3 March 1920 Upper Lisle, N.Y.</b>	<b>T/Sgt.</b>	<b>6980505</b>	<b>Captured</b>	<b>Dulag-Luft West</b>

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REMARKS: **Dulag-Luft on 12 January 1945**

**DATE: 16 Dec 1944**  
**PLACE: Croatia, near**  
**the border to Italy**  
**TYPE: Liberator**  
**766 Sqd**  
**461 Group; 461 Grp.**  
**TARGET: Hq. of**  
**Airfield Laibach**

	<b>U.S.A.</b>	
<b>Rank</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>ASN</b>
<b>T/Sgt.</b>	<b>Hopin, Jack Thomas</b>	<b>331225687</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Lt.</b>	<b>Ward, Jr., Lee Preston</b>	<b>0-664480</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Lt.</b>	<b>Merkouris, Thomas</b>	<b>0-824162</b>
	<b>Michael</b>	
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Lt.</b>	<b>Mundy, Charles E.</b>	<b>0-2063458</b>
<b>F/O</b>	<b>Merry, Kenneth Eugene</b>	<b>T-128702</b>
<b>Cpl.</b>	<b>McDonald, Thomas</b>	<b>31221201</b>
	<b>Henry</b>	
<b>Cpl.</b>	<b>TenHaken, Melvin</b>	<b>36826670</b>
	<b>Gerritt</b>	
<b>Cpl.</b>	<b>Haggerty, Paul Thomas</b>	<b>31310455</b>
<b>Cpl.</b>	<b>Byers, Thomas Frasier</b>	<b>33714183</b>
<b>Cpl.</b>	<b>Wakefield, R. C.</b>	<b>14190769</b>
<b>T/Sgt.</b>	<b>Palmer, jesse Harland</b>	<b>6934540</b>
<b>T/Sgt.</b>	<b>Dunham, Harry</b>	<b>6980505</b>
	<b>William</b>	

**ME-2555**

**F/O Kenneth E. Merry**

**Mrs. Kenneth E. Merry (Wife)  
905 Chestnut Street  
Emporia, Kansas**

**1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Lee PO. Ward, Jr.**

**Mr. Lee P. Ward, Sr. (Father)  
912 Fisher Street  
Houston, Texas**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Thomas M. Merkouris**

**Mr. Michael Merkouris (Father)  
6 Vroom Street  
Jersey City, New Jersey**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Charles E. Mundy**

**Mrs. Marion E. Mundy (Wife)  
253 North Main Street  
Tucson, Arizona**

**T/Sgt. Jesse H. Palmer**

**Mrs. H. E. Palmer (Mother)  
28 South Coy Street  
Kansas City, Kansas**

**T/Sgt. Harry W. Dunham**

**Mrs. Elsie M. Dunham (Mother)  
Upper Lisle, New York**

**Cpl. R. C. Wakefield**

**Mrs. Coy W. Wakefield (Mother)  
Route Two  
Double Springs, Alabama**

**Cpl. Melvin G. TenHaken**

**Mrs. Anna TenHaken (Mother)  
Costburg, Wisconsin**

**Cpl. Thomas F. Byers**

**Mrs. Dorothy L. Byers (Wife)  
Rural Delivery Number One  
Saxonburg, Pennsylvania**

**Cpl. Paul T. Haggerty**

**Mrs. Ann V. Haggerty (Mother)  
147 Osborn Street  
Fall River, Massachusetts**

**Cpl. Thomas H. MacDonald**

**Mrs. Alice MacDonald (Mother)  
21 Garfield Street  
Madison, Maine**