

**WAR DEPARTMENT
HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES
WASHINGTON**

The MISSING AIR CREW REPORT

12940

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 15th AF
Group 461st Bomb Gp (H) Squadron 764th Bomb Sq (H)

2. SPECIFY: Place of departure Torretta, Italy Course straight to target
Target Graz, Austria Type of mission Combat

3. WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED:
4/10 coverage

4. GIVE: [a] Date 9 Mar 45 Time _____ Last known position 44°55'N, 14°52'E approx
[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 **Mid-air collision with another aircraft.**

6. AIRCRAFT: Type, model & series B-24M AAF Serial Number 44-50410

7. NICKNAME OF AIRCRAFT: None

8. ENGINES: Type, model & series R-1830-43 AAF serial Number [a] CP-323192
[b] CP-323316 [c] CP-323256 [d] CP-323319

9. INSTALLED WEAPONS: [Make, type and serial number] All Browning Cal. 50

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| [a] <u>1728083</u> | [e] <u>1728327</u> | [i] <u>1728189</u> |
| [b] <u>1728184</u> | [f] <u>1728567</u> | [j] <u>1726098</u> |
| [c] <u>1728111</u> | [g] <u>1725201</u> | |
| [d] <u>1727280</u> | [h] <u>1724960</u> | |

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

11. NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew 10; Passengers 0; Total 10

[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 | Viliesis, Paul P., 2nd Lt. 0-720629 | MIA | Mr. Paul J. Valiesis (Father) King St., West Hanover, Massachusetts |
| [2] CP | Jahries, Robert H., 2nd Lt. 0-2064062 | MIA | Mr. Harold J. Jahries (Father) 822 San Juan Place, San Diego, Calif. |
| [3] Bomb | Mahnke, Arthur F., S/Sgt. 38707778 | MIA | Mrs. Bertha Mahnke (Mother) 23 156 th Place, Calumat City, Ill. |
| [4] Nav | Leifer, Charles (NMI), 2nd Lt. 0-2069050 | MIA | Mr. Tandore Leifer (Father) 207 E. Oak St., Louisville, Kentucky |
| [5] RWG | Khun, Kenneth M., Sgt. 12076178 | MIA | Mrs. Elisabeth Khun (Mother) 516 Morris Ave., Elizabeth, N.J. |
| [6] LWG | Grebe, Leroy H., S/Sgt. 38163454 | MIA | Mrs. Louise Grebe (Mother) Gen. Del., Welcome, Texas |
| [7] BTG | Davis, Victor W., Sgt. 12161187 | MIA | Mrs. Etta Z. Davis (Mother) 2384 24 th St., Asteria, L.I., N.Y. |
| [8] TTG | MacDonald, William A., Sgt. 32270762 | MIA | Mr. Thomas J. MacDonald (Father) 60 Poplar St., Penns Grove, N.J. |
| [9] TTG | Lee, Robert E., Sgt. 42070165 | MIA | Mrs. Louise H. Lee (Mother) 121 E. 128 th St., New York, N.Y. |
| [10] NTG | Dell'Oso, Joseph V., Sgt. 36755247 | MIA | Mrs. Rose M. Dell'Oso (Mother) 413 23 rd St., Back Island, Illinois |
| [11] | | | |
| [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] George P. Wyherek | S/Sgt. | 15036286 | | X | | |
| [2] Dwight B. Olson | 2nd Lt. | 0-2057582 | | X | | |
| [3] | | | | | | |
| [4] | | | | | | |

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] **Plane last sighted in level flight.**

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: **No search made.**

Date: **14 March 1945**

/s/ William L. Hallauer
 Capt, Air Corps
 Adjutant

764TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
461ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP
APO 520 US ARMY

STATEMENT

10 March 1945

Returning from the mission to Graz, Austria on 9 March 1945, the bombs were still in all the planes of our formation as we were unable to drop them at the target due to weather. Just off the coast of Yugoslavia planes #2 and #5 from our formation collided in mid-air, the former breaking behind the bomb bay and eventually it hit the water and burned with no one having a chance to bail out. Plane #5, piloted by Lt. Viliesis, made a slow bank, started dropping a little, and turned back towards Yugoslavia. We turned and started to escort him. I saw three (3) chutes open and what might have been a fourth open up. We lost sight of the plane piloted by Lt. Viliesis in the clouds, but when I last saw his plane it was in level flight, at a pretty good altitude, and all four engines seemed to be functioning alright with only no. 2 engine smoking. It seems to me that all personnel on Lt. Viliesis's plane seemed to have a fairly good opportunity of bailing out.

/s/ George P. Wyherek, 15036268
S/Sgt, 764 Bomb Sq (H)

STATEMENT

12 March 1945

On the mission to Graz, Austria on 9 March 45 we were flying behind and below the formation on the way back home when planes #2 and #5 collided. Though I did not see the collision, I saw the plane (#2) piloted by Lt. Lalewicz hit the water and explode without anyone escaping. We followed plane #5, Lt. Viliesis, back towards Yugoslavia. I saw one (1) parachute open and the crew reported that four (4) chutes opened. When I last saw Lt. Viliesis' plane, it was flying level at about 13,000 feet. Unless some of the crew were injured from the collision with the other plane, all crew members should have been able to bail out.

/s/ Dwight B. Olson
2nd Lt., Air Corps
Co-Pilot, 764th Bomb Sq

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|-----------------------------|--|--|
| P93 FILE | | DATA ON REMAINS NOT YET RECOVERED OR IDENTIFIED | | | |
| NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) | | GRADE | | PRESENT SERIAL NUMBER (If applicable) | |
| Dell'oso, Joseph V. | | Sgt. | | 36755247 | |
| ORGANIZATION | | RACE | | CREED | |
| 764 Bomb Sq 461 Bomb Gp (H) | | White | | R. Catholic | |
| DATE OF MIA | | CAUSE OF DEATH | | PLACE OF DEATH OR PLACE LAST SEEN IF MIA | |
| 9 Mar 45 | | FOD | | In the vicinity of Otocac, Yugoslavia | |
| DATE OF FOD | | | | | |
| 10 Mar 45 | | | | | |
| HEIGHT | | WEIGHT | | COLOR EYES | |
| 5' 9½" | | 155 | | Brown | |
| | | | | COLOR HAIR | |
| | | | | Black | |
| | | | | SHOE SIZE | |
| | | | | 10C | |
| DENTAL CHART 21 Jun 43 | | | | | |
| UPPER RIGHT | | | UPPER LEFT | | |
| X 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 | | | X 2 3 X 5 X O X | | |
| LOWER RIGHT | | | LOWER LEFT | | |
| 16 O X 13 12 11 10 9 | | | 9 10 11 12 13 14 O X | | |
| X=Extracted | | O=Carlogs | | I=Carlogs non-Rostugia | |
| FRACTURES AND/OR BREAKS | | | TATOOS AND/OR BIRTHMARK | | |
| Not of xxxxxxxxxxxx | | | Not of xxxxxxxxxxxx | | |
| ADDITIONAL INFORMATION | | | | | |
| Age 21 | | | | | |

HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE
APO 520 US ARMY

3 April 1945

SUBJECT: Supplement to Missing Air Crew Report

TO: Commanding General, 49th Wing, APO 520

1. Inclosed information, supplementary to Missing Air Crew Report, has been obtained from:

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| William A. MacDonald | Sgt | 32270762 | 461st B Gp |
| (Name) | (Rank) | (ASN) | (Organization) |

2. It is desired that casualty status of personnel referred to be reviewed.

a. In cases where men are declared to be dead, if the commanding officer believes evidence to be reasonably conclusive, appropriate corrected battle casualty report will be submitted. If evidence is not deemed sufficient, then a statement will be made of reasons for presumption of survival.

b. If place of casualty shown on original battle casualty report does not agree with statement, corrected report should be submitted for those men still missing.

c. Personnel should be submitted Captured or Interred only when evidence shows actual incarceration in an established prison camp or show arrival in a neutral country.

d. If no change is indicated, statement has been forwarded to you for information and inclusion of copy with Missing Air Crew Report.

3. Report will be made by indorsement hereon of action taken.

By command of Major General Twining:

/s/ Windle D. Reel
Major, AC
Assistant AG

360.33 1st Ind.
HQ 49TH BOMB WING (HV), APO 520, 4 Apr 45.

C-WRT-57

TO: CO, 461st Bomb Gp (Hv), APO 520.

For compliance.

BY ORDER OF COLONEL TODD:

/s/ William R. Taylor
CWO, USA,
Asst. Adj.

360.33 2nd Ind.
Hq. 461st Bomb Group (H), APO 520, 5 Apr 45.

LGP/rfq

TO: CO, 764th Bomb Squadron (H), APO 520.

For compliance with basic communication.

By order of Colonel Lawhon:

/s/ Louis C. Pfister,
1st Lt., Air Corp,
Asst Personnel Officer

360.33 3rd Ind.
764th Bomb Sq (H), APO 520, c/o PM, NYC, NY, 7 Apr 45.

WLS/cag

TO: CO, 461st Bomb Gp (H), APO 520, c/o PM, NYC, NY.

1. Supplement to missing Air Crew Report dated 2 April 1945 has been received and included with the Missing Air Crew Report.

2. No change is indicated and the remaining men on this missing air crew will remain on a Missing in Action status.

For the Squadron Commander:

/s/ William D. Hallauer
Capt, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

360.33 4th Ind.
HQ. 461st Bomb Group (H), APO 520, 8 Apr 45.

LCP/rfq

TO: Commanding General, 49th Bomb Wing, APO 520.

/s/ L. C. P.

360.33 5th Ind.
HQ 49TH BOMB WING (HV), APO 520, 9 April 1945.

C-WRT-9

TO: CG, 15th Air Force, APO 520.

Attention invited to 3rd indorsement.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

/s/ WilliamH. Taylor
CWO, USA
Assistant Adjutant.

360.33 6th Ind.
HQ FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE, APO 520, 11 April 1945.

GP/B/eh

TO: CG, MTOUSA, APO 512. Att'n: Casualty Branch, AGD.

Forwarded as supplement to Missing Air Crew Report.

FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL:

/s/ Windle D. Reel
Major, Air Corps
Asst Adj Gen

William A. MacDonald Sgt. 32270762

764 461 9 Mar 45 XXXXXXXXXXXX 1 Apr 45

| | | | |
|-----------|--------------------|---------------------|---------|
| Pilot | Paul P. Viliesis | 2 nd Lt. | Unknown |
| Co-Pilot | Robert H. Jahries | 2 nd Lt. | Unknown |
| Nav | Charles Leifer | 2 nd Lt. | Unknown |
| Asst Bomb | Arthur F. Mahnke | S/Sgt. | Unknown |
| Rt Waist | Kenneth M. Khun | Sgt. | Unknown |
| Lt Waist | Leroy H. Grebe | S/Sgt. | Unknown |
| Ball Gun | Victor W. Davis | Sgt. | Unknown |
| Tail Gun | Robert E. Lee | Sgt. | Unknown |
| Nose Gun | Joseph V. Dell'Oso | Sgt. | Unknown |

Seven members bailed out. X men 6 chutes open – 45 Apr – 35 deg 35'

/s/ William A. MacDonald

CASUALTY REPORT FOR AGO

Prepared by
MIS-X Section
CPM Branch

DATE: **24 Apr 45**

| | | | |
|------------------|---|----------------|----------------------------|
| NARRATOR: | MacDonald, William A., S/Sgt. | SQUADRON: | 764th BS |
| ARMY SERIAL NO.: | 32270762 | GROUP: | 461st BG |
| HOME ADDRESS: | 60 Poplar St., Penns Grove, N.J. | TYPE AIRCRAFT: | B-24 |
| EX-REPORT NO.: | None | MISSION DATE: | 9 Mar 45 |

| POSITION | MEMBERS OF CREW | PWIB RECORDS |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| PILOT | Lt. Paul P. Viliesis | MIA |
| CO-PILOT | Lt. Robert Jahries | MIA |
| NAVIGATOR | Lt. Charles Leifer | MIA |
| BOMBARDIER | Lt. (?) Mahnke | MIA |
| ENGINEER | Sgt. Leroy Grebe | MIA |
| RADIO OPERATOR | Sgt. Kenneth Khun | MIA |
| ARMORER-GUNNER | Sgt. Joseph Dellosa | MIA |
| ARMORER-GUNNER | Sgt. Robert E. Lee | MIA |
| ARMORER-GUNNER | Sgt. Victor W. Davis | MIA |
| ARMORER-GUNNER | S/Sgt. William A. MacDonald | Narrator |

KNOWN INFORMATION: Over Yugoslavia, I saw all crew members bail out of the ship and I saw all chutes opened. This was the last contact I had with the other crew members.

HEARSAY INFORMATION:.

CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your name Jahries, Robert H. Rank 2nd Lt. Serial No. 0-2064062
2. Organization 461st Gp Commander Rank Col Sqn 764th CO Trommershauser Rank Major.
3. What year 1945 month March day 9 did you go down?
4. What was the mission, Marshalling yard, target, Graz, Austria, target time, , altitude, 24,000 ft route scheduled, , route flown ;
5. Where were you when you left formation? 40 mi. north of Zara, Yugoslavia.
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". S/Sgt. Leroy H. Grebe, Sgt. William A. MacDonald and Sgt. Joseph V. Dell'Oso bailed out as soon as the order was given, just after we were hit – due to some confusion because of lack of interphone, the rest of the crew bailed out few minutes later.
9. Where did your aircraft strike the ground? In the mountains along the coast of 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? Last saw Sgt. Joseph V. Dell'Oso before we took off. Navigator came to flight deck before bailing out. Before he left nose he said Sgt. Dell'Oso was putting his parachute on and preparing to bail out. Before I bailed out I looked in nose and it was empty.
- 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 Leifer, Charles (NMI) Rank 2nd Lt. Serial No. 0-2069050
2. Organization 461st Gp Commander Mixson Rank Major Sqn 764th CO Mixson Rank Major.
3. What year 1945 month March day 9 did you go down?
4. What was the mission, bombing, target, Graz, Austria, target time, 1800, altitude, 25,000 ft route scheduled, over Adriatic, over Yugoslavia, route flown same.
5. Where were you when you left formation? Approx. 50 miles southeast of Fiesie, Italy.
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". No crew list attached. No questionnaires. We all bailed out from approx 20,000 ft. to best of my knowledge. Pilot was last to bail out. No knowledge of Sgt. Victor Dell'Oso.
9. Where did your aircraft strike the ground? Approx. 55 to 60 miles SE Fiesie, Italy – 20 miles north of xxxxxx.
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 that I know of.
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? 7 of us were together in POW camp. 8th was sent to another POW camp. 9th returned with friendly aid to Allied hands. 10th missing.
- 14 Please give any similar information on personnel of any other crew of which you have knowledge. Indicate source of information. The other aircraft which was in collision with out plane broke in two pieces at the waist and went down (all believed dead). I saw most of it and other crews on mission report sand.

| | |
|---|---|
| 2nd Lt. Paul P. Vilieisis | Mr. Paul J. Vilieisis (Father) King Street West Hanover, Massachusetts |
| 2nd Lt. Robert H. Jahries | Mr. Harold J. Jahries (Father) 822 San Juan Place San Diego, California |
| 2nd Lt. Charles Leifer | Mr. Isadore Leifer (Father) 207 E. Oak Street Louisville, Kentucky |
| S/Sgt. Arthur F. Mahnke | Mrs. Bertha Mahnke (Mother) 23 156th Place Calumet City, Illinois |
| S/Sgt. Leroy H. Grebe | Mrs. Louise Grebe (Mother) General Delivery Welcome, Texas |
| Sgt. Kenneth M. Khun | Mrs. Elizabeth Khun (Mother) 516 Morris Avenue Elizabeth, New Jersey |
| Sgt. Victor W. Davis | Mrs. Etta Z. Davis (Mother) 2384 24th Street Astoria, Long Island, New York |
| Sgt. William A. MacDonald | Mr. Thomas J. MacDonald (Father) 60 Poplar Street Penns Grove, New Jersey |
| Sgt. Robert E. Lee | Mrs. Louise H. Lee (Mother) 121 E. 128th Street New York, New York |
| Sgt. Joseph V. Dell'Oso | Mrs. Rose M Dell'Oso (Mother) 413 23rd Street Rock Island, Illinois |