

**WAR DEPARTMENT
HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES
WASHINGTON**

The MISSING AIR CREW REPORT

13192

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 Strasshof, Austria Type of mission Combat
3. WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED:
3/10 undercoverage; scattered clouds
4. GIVE: [a] Date 26 Mar 45 Time 1405 Last known position 47°20'N, 15°01'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 **Mechanical failure.**
6. AIRCRAFT: Type, model & series B-24L AAF Serial Number 44-49641
7. NICKNAME OF AIRCRAFT: None
8. ENGINES: Type, model & series R-1830-43 AAF serial Number [a] CP-317900
[b] CP-313787 [c] CP-317672 [d] CP317878
9. INSTALLED WEAPONS: [Make, type and serial number] All Browning Cal. 50

[a] <u>1764590</u>	[e] <u>1764411</u>	[i] <u>1765199</u>
[b] <u>1766127</u>	[f] <u>1766128</u>	[j] <u>1766744</u>
[c] <u>1765024</u>	[g] <u>950199</u>	
[d] <u>1764737</u>	[h] <u>983634</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	Spehalski, Raymon E., 2 nd Lt. 0-715830	MIA	Mr. Stanley A. Spehalski (Father) 120 McCullough St., DuBois, Penna.
[2] CP	Dallas, Christ (NMI), 2 nd Lt. 0-2002032	MIA	Mrs. Pauline A. Dallas (Mother) 6600 Wagner St., Detroit, Michigan
[3] Nav	Leasure, George A., 2 nd Lt. 0-2064278	MIA	Mr. George A. Leasure, Sr. (Father) 1508 Greenwood St., Wichita, Kansas
[4] Photo	Gugel, Louis R., S/Sgt. 35874774	MIA	Mrs. Florence A. Gugel (Mother) 453 Grand Ave., Fort Thomas, Ky.
[5] RWG	Rayburn, John R., Sgt. 32938797	MIA	Mrs. Gertrude Rayburn (Mother) Holcomb, New York
[6] LWG	Lechner, Walter E., Sgt. 38172570	MIA	Mrs. Martha E. Lechner (Mother) Fairhope, Alabama
[7] NTG	Todd, Stanley E., Sgt. 15402695	MIA	Mr. Earl B. Todd (Father) Rt #1, Richmond, Kentucky
[8] TTG	Keller, Jr., Albert L., Sgt. 36779467	MIA	Mrs. Ida G. Keller (Mother) Rt. #6, Peoria, Illinois
[9] BTG	Moran, Jr., Henry L., Sgt. 31349131	MIA	Mrs. Bertha Moran (Mother) 173 Broadway St., Chicopee Falls, Mass.
[10] TTG	Farley, George D., Sgt. 32374633	MIA	Mr. James Farley (Father) 125 Howard St., Wellsville, New York
[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] Frank W. Bell, Jr.	1 st Lt.	0-626072		X		
[2]						
[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].

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: **29 March 1945**

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

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

STATEMENT

While on the mission to Strasshof, Austria on 26 March 1945, I noticed that Lt. Spehalski lost two engines just about over the target. After leaving the target area he fell behind our formation and two P-38's came down to give him cover. The lead ship in our formation called and asked me if I had enough gas to go back and give him cover. As I did, I circled back around and ended up above and behind Lt. Spehalski. I tried to make radio contact but was not successful, and we shot flares to try to warn him of a flak area on his course but could not contact him. Directly over St. Michael I pulled out to his right to avoid the flak. We ended up in front of him and to his right where by looking through field glasses my waist gunner noticed his plane stall out and start to spin. This was at about 16,000 feet. My gunner reported that he thought he saw some chutes but couldn't tell for sure or how many. The P-38, however, was still covering him and the fighter pilot called me and reported seeing nine (9) chutes out and cleared, and the tenth chute opened but hung up on the doomed plane going down with it. My gunners saw the plane disappear behind the mountains. There was quite a lot of flak bursting at about the same altitude (16,000 feet) as Lt. Spehalski's plane and as we were busy dodging flak we were unable to get over very close to him or observe the final crash. The P-38 pilot who reported seeing the nine (9) chutes had a good view of the disabled plane because he was flying back and forth above Lt. Spehalski's plane until it crashed.

/s/ Frank W. Bell, Jr.
1st Lt., Air Corps
Pilot, 764 Bomb Sq

INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of crew member: **SPEHALSKI, Raymon E.**

Rank: **2nd Lt.**

Serial number: **0-715830**

Position: Crew (Bomber) **Pilot**

Did he bail out? **Yes.**

Where? **Kingsted, Austria.**

If not, why not?

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: **When he gave order to bail out.**

Was he injured? **Not before bailing out.**

Where was he when last seen? **On hitting the ground.**

Any hearsay information: **His parachute was said to have opened but the spinning plane caught the parachute and damaged it. A flyer with pilots wings was found dead outside Kingsted, Austria.**

Source: **German soldiers and other members of crew.**

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: **I imagine the plane damaged his parachute beyond usefulness and he went to his death. I was shown a pair of pilot's wings, wrist watch and shoes which I believe belonged to Lt. Spehalski.**

Total number of missions of above crew member: **16.**

Dates and destinations if possible: **March 26, 1945 – Strasshof, Austria.**

CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your name **Henry L. Moran, Jr.** Rank **S/Sgt.** Serial No. **31349131**
2. Organization **461st** Gp Commander Rank Sqn CO **Parsonson** Rank **Capt.**
3. What year **1945** month **March** day **26** did you go down?
4. What was the mission, **bombing**, target, **Strasshof, Austria**, target time, , altitude, **26,000 ft** route scheduled, , route flown
5. Where were you when you left formation? **100 miles south west of target.**
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". **All members jumped immediately after passing over Brock, Austria and the last jumper over Kingsted, Austria.**
9. Where did your aircraft strike the ground? **None.**
10. What members of your crew were in the aircraft when it struck the ground? (Should cross check with 8 above and individual questionnaires).
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.

INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of crew member: **SPEHALSKI, Raymon E.**

Rank: **2nd Lt.**

Serial number: **0-715830**

Position: Crew (Bomber) **Pilot**

Did he bail out? **Attempted to.**

Where? **Over St. Michael, Austria.**

If not, why not? **Chute caught on plane.**

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: **He ordered the crew to bail out.**

Was he injured? **Not before the jump.**

Where was he when last seen? **Attempting to bail out.**

Any hearsay information: **He was dead when the plane hit the ground.**

Source: **People who hid me from SS troops. German soldiers who captured me.**

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: **The two left engines were out & I suppose the plane spun into him & caught his chute.**

Total number of missions of above crew member: **19.**

Dates and destinations if possible: **;**

CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your name Leasure, George A. Rank 2nd Lt. Serial No. 0-2064278
2. Organization 461st Gp Commander Rank Sqn CO Mixon Rank Maj.
3. What year 1945 month March day 26 did you go down?
4. What was the mission, bombing, target, Marshalling yard 12 miles north of Vienna, target time, , altitude, 19,000 ft route scheduled, through Yugoslavia, to Budapest, Hungary, west to target, route flown as briefed.
5. Where were you when you left formation? Above the Danube on a line from Vienna to Judenburg.
6. Did you bail out? About 2 miles south & east of St. Michael, Austria.
7. Did other members of crew bail out? Yes all.
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 knowledge.
9. Where did your aircraft strike the ground? About 7 miles south of St. Michael.
10. What members of your crew were in the aircraft when it struck the ground? (Should cross check with 8 above and individual questionnaires) The pilot – Raymon Spehalski.
11. Where were they in aircraft? Chute caught on plane.
12. What was their condition? Uninjured before jump.
13. When, where, and in what condition did you last see any members not already described above? In plane before jump.
- 14 Please give any similar information on personnel of any other crew of which you have knowledge. Indicate source of information. None.

INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of crew member: **SPEHALSKI, Raymon E.**

Rank: **2nd Lt.**

Serial number: **0-715830**

Position: Crew (Bomber) **Pilot**

Did he bail out? **Yes, after all other members had left ship.**

Where? **Over St. Michels, Austria.**

If not, why not?;

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: **Just before bailing out when the Lt. gave orders to abandon ship.**

Was he injured? **Apparently not prior to bailing out. At least he did not mention the fact.**

Where was he when last seen? **Suspended from his parachute on wing of plane.**

Any hearsay information:;

Source:;

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: **Three engines were feathered before crew bailed out. When Lt. bailed out the fourth engine was pulling full power evidently causing the ship to go into a horizontal spin at which time Lt. Spehalski's chute became caught near the tip of the wing.**

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

Dates and destinations if possible:;

CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your name Keller, Albet Louis Jr. Rank Sgt. Serial No. 36779467
2. Organization 461st Gp Commander Rank Sqn CO Mixon Rank Major.
3. What year 1945 month March day 24 did you go down?
4. What was the mission, bombing, target, Vienna, target time, 2:05, altitude, 25,000 ft
route scheduled, , route flown.
5. Where were you when you left formation? Near Vienna just after bombs away.
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". Within about 10 minutes near St. Michles, Austria, the time then about 3:00 p.m.; the following men bailed out and were later brought together by German troops – Lt. Chris Dallas, Sgt. George Farley, Sgt. Henry Moran, Sgt. Louis Gugel, Sgt. Stanley Todd, Sgt. Walter Lechner, Sgt. Albert Keller, Jr., Lt. George Leasure unknown at time, later reported safe, Lt. Spehalski found dead near ship, Sgt. John Rayburn.
9. Where did your aircraft strike the ground?.
10. What members of your crew were in the aircraft when it struck the ground? (Should cross check with 8 above and individual questionnaires).
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.;

INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of crew member: **SPEHALSKI, Raymon E.**

Rank: **2nd Lt.**

Serial number: **0-715830**

Position: Crew (Bomber) **Pilot**

Did he bail out? **Yes.**

Where? **Kingstadt, Austria.**

If not, why not?;

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: **The pilot told us to hit the silk boys.**

Was he injured? **Not to my knowledge.**

Where was he when last seen? **I saw his body shortly after I was captured about ½ mile north of Kingstadt.**

Any hearsay information:;

Source:;

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: **He bailed out & his chute caught on the wing. He came all the way down that way.**

Total number of missions of above crew member: **12.**

Dates and destinations if possible:;

CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your name John R. Rayburn Rank Sgt. Serial No. 32938797
2. Organization 461st Gp Commander Rank Sqn CO Rank.
3. What year 1945 month March day 26 did you go down?
4. What was the mission, 17, target, Vienna, target time, , altitude, 21,000 ft route scheduled, , route flown.
5. Where were you when you left formation? just after bombs away.
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". All bailed out, 8 of us were together & after I got back to the states I was informed that the navigator was in the hospital in southern Austria.
9. Where did your aircraft strike the ground? ½ mile north of Kingstadt, Austria.
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? The pilot was dead when I saw him after the plane crashed.
- 14 Please give any similar information on personnel of any other crew of which you have knowledge. Indicate source of information.;

INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of crew member: **SPEHALSKI, Raymon E.**

Rank: **2nd Lt.**

Serial number: **0-715830**

Position: Crew (Bomber) **Pilot**

Did he bail out? **He did bail out, but did not clear the plane.**

Where? **About 15 minutes south of Vienna, Austria.**

If not, why not?.

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: **Just before I bailed out, at the controls of the airplane.**

Was he injured? **No, not until he tried to bail out.**

Where was he when last seen? **Was hanging from his parachute, which was caught on some part of the airplane.**

Any hearsay information:.

Source:.

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

Total number of missions of above crew member: **10.**

Dates and destinations if possible: **No knowledge.**

CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your name Christ Dallas Rank 2nd Lt. Serial No. 0-2002032
2. Organization 461st Gp Commander Rank Sqn CO Mixon Rank Major.
3. What year 1945 month March day 25 did you go down?
4. What was the mission, oil fields, target, west of Vienna, target time, 3:00 p.m., altitude, 26,000 ft route scheduled, do not remember, route flown.
5. Where were you when you left formation? Vienna, Austria.
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". Everybody in crew bailed out safely with the exception of the first pilot. His chute caught some part of the airplane forcing him to go down with the airplane.
9. Where did your aircraft strike the ground? About 15 minutes south of Vienna, Austria.
10. What members of your crew were in the aircraft when it struck the ground? (Should cross check with 8 above and individual questionnaires) Bombardier was not on this mission. All the rest of the crew was with us. Also a photographer.
11. Where were they in aircraft? In the waist & nose of airplane.
12. What was their condition? Their condition was alright.
13. When, where, and in what condition did you last see any members not already described above? The last I saw of the first pilot is while he was caught to the airplane dangling from his parachute. I believe he was unconscious at the time. I saw this just after I pulled my ripcord.
- 14 Please give any similar information on personnel of any other crew of which you have knowledge. Indicate source of information.:

INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of crew member: **SPEHALSKI, Raymon E.**

Rank: **2nd Lt.**

Serial number: **0-715830**

Position: Crew (Bomber) **Pilot**

Did he bail out? **His chute opened but attached itself to the falling bomber.**

Where? **Over Kingstadt, Austria.**

If not, why not?.

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: **He ordered us to bail out.**

Was he injured? **Not to my knowledge.**

Where was he when last seen? **Bailing out.**

Any hearsay information: **He was seen attached to his bomber at the tail surface with his shroud lines attached to the plane. He seemed to be hanging very limp. About 8 hours later, we learned he was dead and was identified on the ground about ten feet from the wreckage. His body was broken and bruised.**

Source: **Radio man Rayburn's chute landed nearby and he identified the pilot's body.**

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: **None.**

Total number of missions of above crew member: **17.**

Dates and destinations if possible: **I was not on all his missions.**

CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your name Farley, George D. Rank S/Sgt. Serial No. 32374633
2. Organization 461st Gp Commander Rank Sqn CO Mixon Rank Major.
3. What year 1945 month March day 26 did you go down?
4. What was the mission, Vienna, Austria, target, , target time, , altitude, 23,000 ft route scheduled, , route flown.
5. Where were you when you left formation? Kingstadt, Austria.
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". All members of the crew bailed out in quick succession, but the pilot's chute attached itself to the bomber and he appeared to be unconscious in the air.
9. Where did your aircraft strike the ground? 20 miles south of Kingstadt, Austria.
10. What members of your crew were in the aircraft when it struck the ground? (Should cross check with 8 above and individual questionnaires) Raymon E. Spehalski, 2nd Lieut.
11. Where were they in aircraft? About to parachute out, but chute caught on bomber.
12. What was their condition? I bailed out before he did. He was OK when I last saw him.
13. When, where, and in what condition did you last see any members not already described above? I saw all members except Lieut. Spehalski and Lieut. Leasure within 8 hours after we bailed out.
- 14 Please give any similar information on personnel of any other crew of which you have knowledge. Indicate source of information. None.

INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of crew member: **SPEHALSKI, Raymon E.**

Rank: **2nd Lt.**

Serial number: **0-715830**

Position: Crew (Bomber) **Pilot**

Did he bail out? **Yes.**

Where? **Near Bruck, Austria, place of exit from plane unknown.**

If not, why not?.

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: **"Hit the silk".**

Was he injured? **Believe so by close flak burst.**

Where was he when last seen? **Pilot's cockpit.**

Any hearsay information: **Injured by close flak burst.**

Source: **Co-pilot (Lt. Christ Dallas).**

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: **Chute caught onto wingtip, supposedly seen by other crewmembers.**

Total number of missions of above crew member: **Crew had 14, I had 15.**

Dates and destinations if possible:.

CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your name Louis Rose Gugel Rank S/Sgt. Serial No. 35874774
2. Organization 461st Gp Commander Rank Sqn CO Mixon Rank Major.
3. What year 1945 month March day 26 did you go down?
4. What was the mission, rail yards, target, near Vienna, target time, unknown, altitude, 23,000 ft route scheduled, unknown, route flown unknown.
5. Where were you when you left formation? Near Bruck, Austria.
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". Pilot bailed out after co-pilot, place of exit unknown.
9. Where did your aircraft strike the ground? Mountain side near Bruck.
10. What members of your crew were in the aircraft when it struck the ground? (Should cross check with 8 above and individual questionnaires) No one, although Lt. Spahalski was caught onto outside (seen by other crewmembers).
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 captured together with the exception of the pilot and navigator.
- 14 Please give any similar information on personnel of any other crew of which you have knowledge. Indicate source of information. This was not a regular crew of mine, flying as aerial photographer I flew with different crews and squadrons every mission.

2d Lt. Raymon E. Spehalski	Mr. Stanley A. Spehalski (Father) 120 McCullough Street DuBois, Pennsylvania
2nd Lt. Christ Dallas	Mr. Peter Dallas (Father) 6600 Wagner Street Detroit, Michigan
2nd Lt. Heorge A. Leasure, Jr.	Mr. George A. Leasure, Sr. (Father) 1508 Greenwood Wichita, Kansas
S/Sgt. Louis R. Gugel	Mrs. Florence A. Gugel (Mother) 453 Grand Avenue Fort Thomas, Kentucky
Sgt. John R. Rayburn	Mrs. Gertrude Rayburn (Mother) Holcomb, New York
Sgt. Walter E. Lechner	Mrs. Martha E. Lechner (Mother) Fairhope, Alabama
Sgt. Stanley H. Todd	Mr. Earl B. Todd (Father) Route Number One Richmond, Kentucky
Sgt. Albert L. Keller, Jr.	Mrs. Ida G. Keller (Mother) Route Number Six Peoria, Illinois
Sgt. Harry L. Moran, Jr.	Mrs. Bertha Moran (Mother) 173 Broadway Street Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts
Sgt. George D. Farley	Mr. James Farley, Sr. (Father) 125 Howard Street Wellsville, New York