

BASIC: Ltr, Hq, AAF, Washington, DC, Subj: Request for Missing Air
Crew Report, dtd 20 September 1945.

AG 319.1 GA 1st Ind
HEADQUARTERS, FAR EAST AIR FORCES, APO 925

To: Commanding General, AAF, Washington, 25, DC.
Basic communication complied with.

FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL

//s//

D.T. HAMILTON
Lieutenant Colonel, ASD
Asst Air Adj Gen.

1 Incl:

Incl 1 - Missing Air Crew Report w/ atchmts

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY AIR FORCES
WASHINGTON

REPLY TO: AFPPA-8 (F&R)

SUBJECT: Request for Missing Air Crew Report

20 September 1945

To: Commanding General, Far East Air Forces, APO925, San Francisco, Cal.

Request Missing Air Crew report, as requested by AGO letter, 7 July 1944 ((AG 704 (5 Jul 44) OB-S-AAF-M)), be forwarded with least practicable delay in the case of Second Lt. Richard F. Anderson O-2061123, 865 Bomb Sq, reported missing, missing in action, 17 Jul 45, which report has not been received to date.

For the Commanding General, Army Air Forces:

//s//
N.W. REED
Major, Air Corps
Chief, Notification Section
Personnel Affairs Branch
Personnel Services Division
AC/AS-1

(REPORTING HEADQUARTERS)

MISSING AIR CREW REPORT

14939

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.

1. ORGANIZATION: Location, by name APO #903; Command or Air Force 7th AF.
Group 494th BG; Squadron 865th BS; Detachment _____
2. SPECIFY: Place of Departure APO #903; Course 268 degrees out/132 degrees return
Target of Intended Destination Chiangwan Type of Mission Combat Strike
3. WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED:
9/10 coverage at 6,500' visibility above coverage 15 miles
4. GIVE: (a) Day 17 Month 7 Year 1945; Time 1342; and Location 31-49N 123-25E
of last known whereabouts of missing aircraft.
(b) Specify whether aircraft was last sighted (); Last contacted by radio ();
Forced down (); Seen to Crash (); 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:
A bomb is believed to have exploded right after "Bombs Away"
6. AIRCRAFT: Type, Model and Serial B-24 M-16-FO; AAF Serial Number 44-50957
7. NICKNAME OF AIRCRAFT, if any None
8. ENGINES: Type, Model and Series P&W R-1830-43; AAF SERIAL 44-50957
Number (a) CP-323932; (b) CP-323977; (c) CP-323989; (d) CP-323975
9. INSTALLED WEAPONS: (Furnish below Make, Type and Serial Number);
(a) Browning 50 cal; (b) L/W 1253283; (c) L/N 120306; (d) _____
(e) R/T 1099195; (f) R U/T 1202494; (g) R/B 1201590; (h) _____
(i) L/T 1000386; (j) L U/T 1200748; (k) L/B 1201822; (l) _____
(m) R/W 1253894; (n) R/W 1201590; (o) _____; (p) _____
10. THE PERSONS LISTED BELOW WERE REPORTED AS: (a) Battle Casualty XX
or (b) Nonbattle Casualty _____
11. NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew 11; Passengers 1; Total 12
(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.)

Crew Position	Name in Full (Last Name First)	Rank	Serial Number	Current Status
1. Pilot	<u>Trowbridge, William L.</u>	<u>1st Lt</u>	<u>O-696611</u>	<u>Hospital</u>
2. Co-Pilot	<u>Vosburg, William A.</u>	<u>2nd Lt</u>	<u>O-774369</u>	<u>Hospital</u>
3. Navigator	<u>Ogrinc, Carl A.</u>	<u>1st Lt</u>	<u>O-709441</u>	<u>Hospital</u>
4. Bombardier	<u>Sorden, Joseph D.</u>	<u>2nd Lt</u>	<u>O-698051</u>	<u>Hospital</u>
5. Radar Operator	<u>Anderson, Richard F.</u>	<u>2nd Lt</u>	<u>O-2061123</u>	<u>MIA/KIA</u>
6. Engineer	<u>Holder, Robert R.</u>	<u>Sgt</u>	<u>37509616</u>	<u>MIA/KIA</u>
7. Radio Operator	<u>Mitchell, James D.</u>	<u>Sgt</u>	<u>35724842</u>	<u>MIA/KIA</u>
8. U/T Gunner	<u>Brown, Charles E. Jr.</u>	<u>Sgt</u>	<u>34613458</u>	<u>MIA/KIA</u>
9. B/T Gunner	<u>Cianfrini, Fred R.</u>	<u>Sgt</u>	<u>32581301</u>	<u>MIA/RTD</u>
10. T Gunner.	<u>Cain, Novell A.</u>	<u>Sgt</u>	<u>19147805</u>	<u>MIA/KIA</u>

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11. N Gunner	Stanford, Arthur T.	Sgt	18189056	Hospital
12. Command Pilot	Gernert, William E.	Major	O-24906	Hospital

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

(Last Name First)	Rank	Serial Number	Contacted by Radio	Last Sighted	Saw Crash	Saw Forced Landing
1. Drake, Robert E.	1st Lt	O-713366		XX		
2. Brandel, Michael J.	Sgt	16119682		XX		
3. Bevis, David A.	Sgt	15126672		XX		

13. IF PERSONNEL ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE SURVIVED, ANSWER YES TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS: (a) Parachutes were used XX; (b) Persons were seen walking away from scene of crash _____; (c) Any other reason (Specify) _____

14. ATTACH AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH, MAP, CHART, OR SKETCH, SHOWING APPROXIMATE LOCATION WHERE AIRCRAFT WAS LAST SEEN OR HEARD FROM.

15. ATTACH EYEWITNESS DESCRIPTION OF CRASH, FORCED LANDING, OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES PERTAINING TO MISSING AIRCRAFT.

16. GIVE NAME, RANK, AND SERIAL NUMBER OF OFFICER IN CHARGE OF SEARCH, IF ANY, INCLUDING DESCRIPTION AND EXTENT Dumbo

17. REMARKS OR EYEWITNESS STATEMENTS:

See attached sheet

Date of Report 18 July 45

(Signature of Preparing Officer)
EARL M. RICHARDS
Captain, Air Corps
Operations officer

REMARKS OF EYE WITNESS STATEMENT

I, Lt. ROBERT E. DRAKE, O-713366, was flying number two (2) position of the first element. Just as the bombs were going out of the bomb bay an explosion occurred right in the middle of the first element. I broke away to the right, but came back into formation immediately. I could see what looked to be gasoline, streaming out of the bomb bay of the lead airplane. I then got in contact with this airplane and they asked me to lead them to Dumbo, so Dumbo could escort them home. I tried to contact Dumbo but was unable to do so. Just then the lead airplane contacted me and said they had contacted Dumbo, and he was coming to the rescue. Just a few minutes later, I received another message that they were going to abandon the airplane, and for me to orbit. I immediately started to circle to the right, and before losing sight of the airplane in the undercast, I saw four (4) parachutes open. I continued to circle, trying to contact Dumbo, but was still unable to contact him. I then had my navigator plot the position and radioed it in to the Okinawa ground station. I then returned to the home base.

//s//

ROBERT E. DRAKE,
1st Lt, Air Corps
O-713366

REMARKS OF EYE WITNESS STATEMENT

I, Sgt. DAVID A. BEVIS, 15126672, was standing by the ball turret as we were going over the target. Just when the last of our bomb were away, I was thrown down between the bulkhead and the Sperry Ball, by a terrific explosion. I then jumped up and looked out the side window to see what had happened. The formation had spread out and was making a sharp turn to the right. We then stayed with the lead airplane until we saw eight men bail out and their parachutes open. Right after that, we lost sight of the lead plane as it disappeared in the undercast. After circling for a while we then started for our home base.

//s//

DAVID A. BEVIS,
Sgt., Air Corps
15126672.

REMARKS OF EYE WITNESS STATEMENT

I, Sgt MICHAEL J. BRANDEL, 16119572, was standing by the right window, number two (2) plane, lead element. Just as we were going over the target, I felt a terrific explosion. When I sighted the lead airplane, I could see that the right waist window had been blown out and the bottom of the airplane looked to be scorched. We then stayed with this airplane until it started to loose altitude. Just before the airplane entered the undercast we saw eight men bail out and their parachutes open. After circling for a while, we returned to our home base.

//s//

MICHAEL J. BRANDEL
Sgt., Air Corps
16119572

865TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
494TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO #331

I, Major WILLIAM E. GERNERT, make the following statement in reference to aircraft accident, A/C 44-50957
17 July 45:

Lt. Trowbridge and his crew bailed out of the airplane while it was in a tight circle. It is reasonable to expect that everyone hit the water in a relatively small area, approximately three (3) miles across. Twenty hours later, seven members of the crew were picked up in the area of similar size. While I was still present, a search by three Coronada's and two Mariners for over two hours in the immediate and surrounding areas failed to locate the remaining five members of the crew. I believe it reasonable to assume that those five members met death in the water due to causes unknown. in my twenty hours in the water, I did not see another member of the crew.

//s//
WILLIAM E. GERNERT
Major., Air Corps
Acting Command Pilot
A/C 44-50957

865TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
494TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO #331

I, S/Sgt Fred R. Cianfrini, make the following statement in reference to aircraft accident, A/C 44-50957, 17 July 45:

During the bomb run, I was sitting next to the aft door leading to the bomb bay. Immediately upon hearing bombs away I started to open the door to check if all bombs had dropped. At that instant there was a terrific explosion and I was hurled to the waist of the ship. Everyone prepared for bail out. From the reports over the interphone, and what I could see, most of the damage was in the bomb bays and nose. The waist section, wings, vertical stabilizers, and tail sections were all badly riddled. Soon after the engines started to go out, and before long, number two was the only one left. Pilot gave orders to jump, so everyone in the waist hit the silk.

I jumped second, and had no trouble at all with my chute. Not knowing how to swim, I yelled for help as soon as I was free of the chute, and had the Mae West inflated. S/Sgt Stanford heard my call, and came to me. We stayed together from then on. Next day Dumbo came over and fished us out.

//s//
S/Sgt Fred R. Cianfrini,
Ball Gunner, A/C 44-50957

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865TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
494TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO #331

I, S/Sgt Arthur T. Stanford, make the following statement in reference to aircraft accident, A/C 44-50957, dated 18 July 45:

The same instant "Bombs Away" there was a terrific explosion, with intense heat. Lt. Trowbridge then gave command to abandon positions and prepare to bail out. So, Lt. Sorden and myself started for the waist position. (me first). When I got to the bomb bay, I saw that gasoline was leaking so badly that it was impossible to see the rear of the bomb bay. We were all in the waist position (that is 6 of us), awaiting orders to hit the silk, when we noticed S/Sgt Cianfrini had his chute on upside down. When we turned it over, we saw it had been hit by flak, and was nearly useless. It just so happened that I had put an extra chute aboard when we took off, so he used it. Number 1, 3, and 4 engines cut out, so we started bailing out. When my chute opened, I could see 10 chutes open above me, and one in the water below. When I hit the water and discarded my chute, I had lost all sense of direction. I wanted to go with somebody, but was unable to see anyone at first. Finally, I saw a head bob up about 200 yards to my right, so started to swim toward it, when I heard Cianfrini call my name. I knew he didn't know how to swim, so I struck out for him. I found I wasn't getting anywhere with my Mae West on, so I took it off, and was by his side in no time. I held on to the neck of my Mae West, and Fred hung on to the other end. we gave up hope of being picked up that night, so I put my Mae West back on and Fred rode piggy back, until the next morning. At day light, we thought we saw an island, so started to swim to it. After about 2 hours of that, we noticed Dumbo coming over the horizon.

//s//

S/Sgt Arthur T. Stanford
Nose Gunner, A/C 44-50957

865TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
494TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO #331

I, 1st Lt. William L. Trowbridge, make the following statement in reference to aircraft accident, A/C 44-50957, 17 July 45:

STATEMENT

At the time of "Bombs Away", a terrific explosion occurred near the plane. This explosion caused the plane to be severely damaged. We knew the plane had been hit and began evasive action away from the target. Within a few seconds the damage reports were coming from various crew members in all sections of the plane. It was also reported that the navigator had been hit by a piece of flak.

The main damage to the plane was in the bomb bay section. All four main gas tanks were badly leaking. The hydraulic system was completely destroyed. The whole bomb bay was badly mangled. One piece of flak hit the nose section, tearing loose the nose turret doors. The left wing tip had been torn off, and both wings had numerous holes, causing them to look as if they were sieves. There was a very large hole by the radar spinner and the spinner had been "knocked out". There were many holes in the fuselage at the waist section, on both sides. The tail sections also had a considerable number of holes. I estimate from the reports, that more than 200 holes were in the plane.

When turning away from the target the gasoline was leaking very badly, and at this point it was assumed the plane could not return to home base. At this time it was decided not to attempt a ditching. It is my opinion that a ditching of that plane would have been 100% unsuccessful.

Dumbo was contacted and he attempted to come to us, while we attempted to head for the reference point. It was thought that upon joining Dumbo, either we could try to fly home with him, or if not, that we could bail out and be picked up immediately. This seemed the wisest course to follow.

The gasoline almost entirely stopped leaking at one point and although we could not tell how much fuel we had left, there was a chance of making it back to base. However, at this time one engine quit running and it was feathered. The engineer transferred fuel to it and it was restarted. At this time the gasoline started leaking badly from all tanks again. We prepared the crew to bail out while proceeding on a course to meet Dumbo. Our #2 wing man was escorting us and navigating for us. After a short time #1 and #2 engines both ran out of fuel. Then #4 ran out of fuel. This happened above 6,000 ft. The crew was signaled and told to bail out. There were five enlisted men and one officer in the waist, and one enlisted man and five officers on the flight deck. The officer in the waist section, Lt. Joseph D. Sorden, said that all the enlisted men left that section before he did. The engineer, who was on the flight deck, was the first to go in that section, and was

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followed by the officers. I was the eleventh man to jump, followed only by Major William E. Gernert, the Command Pilot of the formation. When I broke through the undercast, I saw 1- chutes in the air and hitting the water. I know that all parachutes opened. I also saw the spot where the plane went into the water. It was a flaming mass of oil and gasoline.

Upon hitting the water, I released my chute harness and inflated my Mae West. I then waited the approach of Dumbo, who did not appear.

Twenty hours later I saw two Coronado's who were joined by two PBM's a few minutes later and also two P-51's. I was the first man recovered and a this time I learned that seven of us had been spotted.

//s//

WILLIAM L. TROWBRIDGE,
1st Lieut., Air Corps,
Pilot, A/C 44-50957