

**WAR DEPARTMENT
HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES
WASHINGTON**

The MISSING AIR CREW REPORT

5041

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 766th Bomb Sq (H)
2. SPECIFY: Place of departure Torretta, Italy Course 58°
Target Wiener Neustadt, Austria Type of mission Combat
3. WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED:
Half coverage 5/10 cumulus strato 10,000 to 12,000 feet
4. GIVE: [a] Date 24 May 1944 Time 11:17 Last known position Wiener Neustadt, Austria
[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 H AAF Serial Number 42-52405
7. NICKNAME OF AIRCRAFT: _____
8. ENGINES: Type, model & series P&W R-183043 AAF serial Number [a] CP 300900
[b] CP 300908 [c] CP 300978 [d] CP 300926
9. INSTALLED WEAPONS: [Make, type and serial number] All Browning Cal. 50
[a] 1150995 [e] 952007 [i] unknown
[b] 681629 [f] 952140 [j] unknown
[c] 1153057 [g] 951329
[d] 110458 [h] 951138
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	Bigelow, Robert L., 1st Lt. 0-682773		Florence E. Bigelow (Mother) 1208 N. Main, Roswell, New Mexico
[2] CP	Dickinson, Jr., John W., Capt. 0-429371		Mary Dickinson (Mother) 207 McLamore, Brownsville, Tennessee
[3] Nav	Fisher, Floyd E., 2nd Lt. 0-695895		Dorothy Fisher (Wife) 328 East Second St., Ottuwa, Iowa
[4] Bomb	Muller, William J., 2nd Lt. 0-688385		Elizabeth Muller (Mother) 1745 Gaulbert Ave., Louisville, Kentucky
[5] BTG	Hourican, John M., S/Sgt. 32201231		Mark Hourican (Father) 49th St. Astoria, Long Island, New York
[6] TG	Lane, Robert G., S/Sgt. 39276241		Thomas W. Lane (Father) 1331 Oak St., Los Angeles, California
[7] NTG	Caron, Frank P., S/Sgt. 39269401		Nettie M Caron (Mother) 349½ Wisconsin Ave., Long Beach, California
[8] RWG	Tarpey, Joseph P., T/Sgt. 32276602		Marie Tarpey (Wife) 405 Jefferson Ave., Dunellen, New Jersey
[9] TTG	Rudisill, Edwin A., S/Sgt.		Alma R. Rudisill (Wife)

39272179

1459 American Ave., Long Beach,
California

[10] LWG Paccione, Michael T., S/Sgt.
12218938

Mary Paccione (Mother)
236 Schanectady Ave., Brooklyn, 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] Childress, Samuel E.	S/Sgt.	14001438		X		
[2] Carlock, Albert F.	S/Sgt.	39455785		X		
[3] Powers, Dennie E.	S/Sgt.	17128724		X		
[4] Scott, James V.	S/Sgt.	15333848		X		

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

[X] 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: **None.**

Date: 27 May 1944

/s/ Robert A. Preciado

765TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
461ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP
APO 520 US ARMY

STATEMENT

24 May 1944

Just after bombs away a burst of flak seemed to hit number three engine and it caught on fire leaving a trail of fire about twenty feet behind and curling into the waist as far as I could see, she was intact but no one had bailed out as it went under ship 56 which I was observing from. The fire spread to number four engine.

/s/ S/Sgt. Samuel E. Childress
14001438

STATEMENT

24 May 1944

Saw ship in flame and watched it going down. Saw two chutes open shortly after and two further down which looked smaller. Evidently two pulled chutes right away and the other two pulled ripcord a little later.

/s/ S/Sgt. Albert F. Carlock
39455785

Since hearing the fore going typed off hand, received a letter from Lieutenant W.J. Muller, 1745 Gaulet Street, Louisville, Kentucky claiming he still doesn't recall name of the pilot in front who witnessed the downing of Muller's plane. Claims a fairly strong wind was blowing at the time, about 25 or 50 miles per hour from the north west or approximately 315°. Thinks the debris drifted or was blown to the east side of railroad from Wiener Neustadt to Mullesburg & must have been scattered over wide territory as the explosion took place at high altitude.

STATEMENT

24 May 1944

Number three engine was extinguished and feathered but number four was still burning. The ship was kept well under control for at least three minutes, while four chutes blossomed, then the left wing was ripped off and immediately the ship blew into bits.

/s/ S/Sgt. James V. Scott
15333848

STATEMENT

24 May 1944

I saw a burst of flak hit direct in the bomb bay. Fire broke out immediately then the bombs dropped and he fell out of formation. The ship blew up at about 12,000 feet. Four chutes came out of the ship.

/s/ S/Sgt. D. E. Powers
17128724

CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your name William J. Muller Rank 1st Lt. Serial No. 0-688385
2. Organization 461st Gp Commander Glantzberg Rank Col Sqn CO Dooley Rank Maj.
3. What year 1944 month May day 24 did you go down?
4. What was the mission, Bombing, target, Airport Weiner Neustadt, Austria, target time, 1150, altitude, 23,000 ft route scheduled, from Cerignola, Italy, route flown scheduled.
5. Where were you when you left formation? Over target.
6. Did you bail out? Yes.
7. Did other members of crew bail out? One other member – nose gunner.
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". Sgt. Frank Caron bailed out shortly after I did. Plane blew up before any one else got out.
9. Where did your aircraft strike the ground? Not known, Disintegrated.
10. What members of your crew were in the aircraft when it struck the ground? (Should cross check with 8 above and individual questionnaires) Not known.
11. Where were they in aircraft? No knowledge.
12. What was their condition? No knowledge.
13. When, where, and in what condition did you last see any members not already described above? Other eight members seen last before target was reached.
- 14 Please give any similar information on personnel of any other crew of which you have knowledge. Indicate source of information.

List of crew missing

Capt John W. Dickinson

1st Lt. Robert L. Bigelow

T/Sgt. Joseph P. Tarpey

S/Sgt. Michael T. Paccione

S/Sgt. John M. Hourican

S/Sgt. Robert G. Lane

S/Sgt. Frank P. Caron (Returned was POW)

S/Sgt. Edwin A. Rudisill

MACR 5041

BIGELOW, ROBERT L.	0682773	KIA	28 JUN	186078
CARON, FRANK P.	37 269 401	POW	28 JUN	186078
FISHER, FLOYD E.	0695895	KIA	28 JUN	186078
HOURICAN, JOHN M.	32 201 231	KIA	28 JUN	186078
MULLER, WILLIAM J.	0688385	POW	5 AUG	230092
PACCIONE, MICHAEL T.	12 218 938	KIA	28 JUN	186078
TARPEY, JOSEPH P.	32 276 602	KIA	28 JUN	186078

Bits of information concerning the mission of May 24, 1944 over Wiener Neustadt, Austria by Squadron 766, Group 461, wherein was shot down a B-24 bomber plane of which the following men were crew members:

- (1) Captain John W. Dickinson, Jr. 0-429371 – Flight or Squadron commander and occupying co-pilot's seat. (Lt. Robt. Dymont)
- (2) 1st Lieutenant Robert L. Bigelow 0-682773 – Pilot - Killed
- (3) 2nd Lieutenant William J. Muller 0-688385 – Bombardier – Captured as POW and now released
- (4) 2nd Lieutenant Floyd E. Fisher 0-695895 – Navigator – Killed
- (5) T/Sgt. Joseph P. Tarpey 32276602 – Radio operator – Killed
- (6) S/Sgt. Michael T. Paccione 12218938 - Top turret gunner – Killed
- (7) S/Sgt. Hohn M. Hourican 32201231 – Ball turret gunner – Killed
- (8) S/Sgt. Frank P. Caron 39269401 – Nose turret gunner – Captured as POW and now released
- (9) S/Sgt. Robert G. Lane 39276241 – Tail gunner – Missing
- (10) S/Sgt. Edwin A. Rudisill 39272179 – Engineer and top turret gunner – Missing

Plane number was B-24-H 42-52405 Group Crew No. 54 painted in large figures on nose of plane. These numbers confirmed by Muller and Caron. Colonel Frederic E. Glantzberg was Group Leader and in command on this mission and says, "Ship hit by flak, shortly lost altitude and was observed to blow up. Conflicting statements about number of chutes couldn't observe himself on account being in lead position."

In different ways and from different sources it is suggested that the following ones might throw some light on this mission over Wiener Neustadt, Austria on May 24, 1944.

- (1) Lieutenant Richard Behrens – Hebron, Illinois, RFD 1
- (2) Lieutenant Norman H. Cogswell – Fort Fairfield, Maine
- (3) Lieutenant Joseph M. Clarke – 1015 Magnolia Ave., Bowling Green, Kentucky
- (4) Major Charles R. Phillips – 320 West Twohig St., San Angelo, Texas
- (5) Lieutenant Howard R. Stillman – 2876 South 47th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- (6) Lieutenant Robert L. Wellborne – 212 South Spring Street, Louisville, Kentucky
- (7) S/Sgt. Frank J. Chappell – Oakland, North Carolina
- (8) S/Sgt. Samuel E. Childress – 36 Third Avenue, Birmingham, Alabama
- (9) S/Sgt. James V. Scott – RFD 2, Mudelein, Illinois
- (10) S/Sgt. Donnie E. Powers – RFD 2, Attamont, Kansas
- (11) Major Leigh M. Lotte – Combat Intelligence Officer, Group 461
- (12) Mrs. Dorothy Fisher – 328 East Second St., Ottumwa, Iowa
- (13) S/Sgt. Richard F. Daley – Sheppard Field, Texas (April 18, 1945)
- (14) Captain W. J. Franklin
- (15) Major Burk
- (16) Captain Bock
- (17) Lieutenant Robert Dymont – Co-pilot
- (18) Lieutenant W. J. Muller – 1745 Gaulbert St., Louisville, Kentucky
- (19) S/Sgt. Frank P. Caron 349 ½ Wisconsin Ave., Long Beach, California

Statements made by the following ones in letters to me or some of the nearest of kin:

States Lieutenant Robert L. Wellborne (6) who was in Squadron following 766 Squadron:

“Flak struck before or after “bombs away”. We were busy both to and from the target. His (Wellborne) plane in the extreme rear of the entire formation and under fighter attacks or threatened attacks at the time. Nose gunner told him that he saw three (3) parachutes. He (Wellborne) looked below for a split second and confirmed this statement then back to – etc.”

States Major Leigh M. Lotte (11) Combat Intelligence Officer of Group 461:

“Dickinson was leading A flight. Plane hard hit by flak over target, eased out of formation and away from the other planes. Several chutes were seen to open by others. Six individuals in three different planes made statements that they saw the plane when it was hit by flak. They are Lieutenant Howard R. Stillman (5) 2876 South 47th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Lieutenant Robert L. Wellborne, (6) 212 South Spring Street, Louisville, Kentucky, S/Sgt. Frank J. Chappell, (7) Oakland, North Carolina, S/Sgt. Samuel E. Childress (8) 36 Third Avenue, Birmingham, Alabama, S/Sgt. James V. Scott (9) RFD 2, Mudelein, Illinois, S/Sgt. Donnie E. Powers (10) RFD 2, Attamont, Kansas. The attack was made at high altitude.”

States Captain Charles R. Phillips (4)

“Your son’s plane received direct hit in bomb bay causing a fire to start. Bombs were immediately salvoed and plane dropped from formation. After leaving formation plane was under control for about two or three minutes, when the left wing fell off and the plane exploded. Four chutes were seen to emerge from the plane just before the explosion.”

States S/Sgt. Samuel E. Childress (8)

“States he believes he was first to see flak strike as he was looking directly at plane when it was hit by flak in No. 3 engine. Fire started and was on right side. Saw three chutes before plane drifted under him and out of vision. I do know plane blew up. His pilot and 4 other members of his crew who saw it as he did. Went down over Linz, Austria and were made prisoners.”

1st Lieutenant Joseph M. Clarke states he was not flying that day and does not recall any details about mission.

S/Sgt. James V. Scott: Mrs. Scott writes for him February 7, 1945 stating his intelligence officer would not permit him to answer any of the questions. She states that he did say he couldn’t see how anyone could have gotten out of that plane.

Dorothy Fisher 328 East 2nd Street, Ottumwa, Iowa, wife of Lieutenant Floyd E. Fisher, navigator and killed under date of September 21, 1945, gives identifying numbers of each of the crew, serial number of plane and group crew number. States that last letter from husband stated that crew was still flying old “405” or same plane.

Lieutenant W. J. Franklin June 27, 1944, states excuses himself under Army and census regulations from answering details, but states he was in rest camp and after inquiring of those on the mission thinks there would be little hope for safety of any of the crew.

Lieutenant Richard Behrens states February 7, 1945 didn't fly that mission and unable to remember anything about details.

Lieutenant Muller, one of the prisoners of war, states that he and Caron can only assure that the rest of crew were lost because they saw no other chutes. Both left just before explosion and were both slightly burned. Couldn't say how long an interval between leaving and when hit by flak, short time. Thinks any other chute could have been seen by them even if bailed out at time of hit. Tried to talk to pilot by interphone but couldn't. Saw no other member of the crew. Says position of plane when hit was about five (5) miles south of Wiener Neustadt and near a railroad which runs through a town named Mittlesburg, small town at Mittlesburg near where we landed.

Caron, one of the prisoners of war, states to T. W. Lane according to Lane's letter,

“Superior officer lines them up for departure at 6 A.M. with Bigelow at control and Dickinson in co-pilot's place as Squadron leader. Passed target, and returned. Released bomb controls and in 2 or 3 seconds plane sort of jumped and Bigelow pulled out of formation and plane dove down straight towards ground and after short space Bigelow righted the plane and following that (Caron said) fire started shooting into nose section. Caron seized fire extinguisher and found it empty, turned and saw bombardier preparing chute to leave. He left front door and Caron followed. Caron states as he went out door or shortly thereafter he felt a concussion and it knocked him unconscious for a short time, then pulled cord and sailed down. Caron seems to think he and Muller reached ground about three (3) blocks apart. Guards placed both in car. Muller with injured leg to hospital and he to prison. Caron states bail out signal was and had been ringing all the while when he left.”

T. W. Lane is father of S/Sgt. Robert G. Lane, 39276241, tail gunner – missing.

S/Sgt. Frank Caron states:

Just after bombardier says “bombs away” got a direct hit by flak which threw ship out of control and at that time we left formation. At sound of ‘bail out bell’ I got out of my turret, put on my chute tried to put out encroaching fire with extinguisher, cast same aside because it was empty. States he waited for the bombardier to leave. He then jumped following bombardier. Just after leaving ship exploded and knocked him unconscious. Says he saw no chutes other than his and Muller (bombardier).

Lieutenant Dymment states:

“In letter to Mrs. D. A. Fisher that men in the mission reported five (5) chutes as leaving injured plane.”

Lane states in letter that Caron states senior officer lines them up with Dickinson to go as squadron leader and he chose Bigelow's plane which automatically grounded co-pilot Dymont. Leave 6 A.M. with Dickinson as squadron leader. Fly over east Austria, pass target and return. Muller releases bomb control and in 2 or 3 second plane sort of jumps and Bigelow pulls out of formation and plane dove down straight towards ground and after short space Bigelow righted same and following that, fire started shooting into nose of plane. Turning he sees bombardier preparing chute for jump. He follows Muller out front door and feels concussion just after leaving which knocks him unconscious. Recovering shortly he pulls cord and sails down and sees bit of plane in air. Sees no other chutes. Both reach ground. Caron thinks about 3 blocks apart. Caron was taken by Germans to car and before car pulls out sees Muller being brought up and both are taken away in same car. Muller hospitalized and Caron to prison. Caron stated Germans stated, upon his being liberated, all killed but two, tags at Geneva.

States Lieutenant H. R. Stillman (5)

He, Stillman, was riding co-pilot on this mission according to pilot and statement. Captain Dickinson was leading the lead flight of the first attack unit of our group. We were flying No. 2 in the low lead flight of the 2nd attack unit. We were of a different squadron but same group and our position was just a short distance behind him. Hadn't at that time dropped bombs but bomb bay doors were opened. He, Stillman, noticed the ship of Dickinson burst into flames from front bomb bay back. This he says would be 4 or 5 feet behind the pilot's compartment. Ship was then nosed down in a fairly gentle dive, putting him clear of formation. He (Stillman) saw a piece of airplane shoot into his view and then disappear. Nose gunner informed him that ship had just blown up. Said he saw three or four chutes and possibly five but not positive as to number. Nose gunner's address, home, S/Sgt. Frank Chappell, 2 Hillendale Road, Post Office Box 876, Ashville, North Carolina.

S/Sgt. Frank Chappell states he was in different squadron but same group and can't recall what happened that day. Gives name of one who was of same squadron and group, S/Sgt. Richard Daley 3705 B4 Lowery Field, Denver, Colorado.

S/Sgt. Richard F. Daley 13174734 under date of April 18, 1945 Sqd. A 3706 AAF BU (BTC) Barrack 829 Sheppard Field, Texas states:

"I had been over this target before, one of the worst in Europe. Weather was cloudy and most of the country was the same around the target. We made our first run on the target and had to turn off because of something I had no knowledge of. The second time over we ran into fighters but none fired at us although I did at them. After the attack on the airfield we found we had lost a ship to flak – but none of our crew were injured." States he will inquire of other members of his crew whom he thinks kept notes as he did.

Since having the foregoing typed off have received a letter from Lieutenant W. J. Muller 1745 Guilbert St., Louisville, Kentucky stating he still doesn't recall name of pilot in prison who witnessed the downing of Muller's plane.

States a pretty strong wind blowing 25 to 30 miles per hour from the northwest or approximately 315°. Thinks the debris drifted or was blown to the east side of railroad from Wiener Neustadt to Mittlesburg and must have been scattered over wide territory as the explosion took place at high altitude.

List of questions with answers asked of Lieutenant Muller after return to Louisville from prison in Germany.

- (1) What kind of weather?
Answer: Somewhat cloudy and this perhaps was cause for passage over target and a return before bombs were released.
- (2) If bombs had not been released could pilot and co-pilot have gotten out of hatch?
Answer: Yes.
- (3) Is there another escape hatch near by?
Answer: Yes.
- (4) What kind of parachute did you wear – old kind or chest type?
Answer: New kind may have been issued to pilot and co-pilot. Don't know.
(Muller says he saw and talked with a pilot in prison who saw plane from time it was hit by flak and time it blew up. This pilot, he thinks, was later shot down over Linz, Austria. He fails to remember his name.)
- (5) Is the cockpit compartment occupied by pilot and co-pilot?
Answer: Yes.
- (6) Is the nose section compartment occupied by the navigator and bombardier?
Answer: Yes, the bombardier and usually the navigator.
- (7) Who was navigator?
Answer: Fisher. His table was folded up and he had gone back into cockpit. This fold up prevents view back into cockpit on that side.
- (8) Is the nose section about on level with feet, knees of pilot and co-pilot?
Answer: Yes.
- (9) Could you see feet and knees of pilot back of you?
Answer: With difficulty I could have seen, but didn't.
- (10) Was Fisher there when you took to chute?
Answer: No.
- (11) What became of him?
Answer: Don't know, he had gone back.
- (12) Did you see the pilot, co-pilot, or any of the others before you jumped?
Answer: None.
- (13) You (Muller) state that conclusion of you and Caron about number of chutes is based on seeing no other chutes?
Answer: Yes.

- (14) That any and all chutes, even if taking off immediately after flak struck, could have been seen by both of you.
Answer: I think so. It's possible they could have left earlier than we and been out of vision.
- (15) Had bombs been released?
Answer: Yes, certain.
- (16) Were any other planes lost in this mission?
Answer: Yes, think so, but not in this or our outfit.
- (17) Do you know of anyone else who witnessed downing of this plane?
Answer: I talked with a pilot in prison camp who stated he saw whole affair but I am unable to recall his name. I think he was shot down over Linz and captured.
- (18) Was flak struck on right or left side?
Answer: Right engine No. 3 and in bomb bay, two strokes.
- (19) Did you hear pilot or co-pilot just before leaving?
Answer: No. (Muller states bombs did release and just after being struck).
- (20) Did you see them or any others?
Answer: No.
- (21) Who sounds "bail out bell"?
Answer: Pilot usually, sometimes co-pilot.
- (22) Had it been sounded?
Answer: Yes.
- (23) How long had it been ringing?
Answer: Don't know. (Caron indicates it had been ringing for some time when he jumped)
- (24) Did squadron pass target and then come back to make bomb release?
Answer: Yes.
- (25) What direction by the compass were you going when struck?
Answer: South or perhaps a bit east of near to railroad running from Wiener Neustadt, a bit east of same, and about 1/3 of way from Wiener Neustadt to Mittlesburg.
- (26) After plane was struck and proceeded to leave formation, did this leaving appear to be under control or guidance or a movement at random or out of control?
Answer: Yes, under control.
- (27) Most all reports state that plane nosed sharply downward and was then brought back to somewhat level. What about this?

Answer: Felt like it did nose downward, but ship seemed to be on even keel when taking to chutes.

(28) Did it seem to you that this downward dash and righting was under control?

Answer: Yes, seemed like under control of pilot or co-pilot or some one.

(29) Do you know whether the navigator, nose gunner or anyone else tried to contact pilot or co-pilot or anyone with interphone?

Answer: Don't know.

(30) Are pilot, co-pilot and others required to wear chutes at all time while flying?

Answer: Instructed to wear, but don't.

(31) Fisher, the navigator was killed outright by the first strike of flak, wasn't he?

Answer: Don't know, not in front of my compartment at time.

(32) What was the general view or opinion about being lynched by the populace?

Answer: No particular suspicion of this.

(33) Who sounds the bail out bell?

Answer: Pilot.

(34) What arrangement for keeping it ringing all the time?

Answer: None.

(35) Does someone else at command of pilot sound this bell?

Answer: Yes.

(36) Did you fly over target more than once?

Answer: Yes, over and back.

(37) Were the bombs released before flak struck?

Answer: After.

(38) Was the navigator table folded up?

Answer: Yes.

(39) When you jumped was the plane level or in what position?

Answer: About level.

Referring to AFPPA-8
AAF 201 Dickinson, John W., Jr. 0429371

207 Mclemore Street
Brownsville, Tennessee
December 3, 1945

Leon W. Johnson, Brigadier General, USA
Chief, Personnel Services Division
Headquarters, Army Air Forces
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of November 19 for which I thank you. In this you requested the bits of information I may have concerning a bombing mission made out of southern Italy over Wiener Neustadt, Austria on May 24, 1944, in which a plane was shot down and most of the crew lost. These bits of information are acquired mostly through correspondence with nearest of kin and others, and I am making out a synopsis or summary of information that relates in any way with such. If for any reason, you should desire the original letters, please let me know, and I will at once bundle them up and mail them to you. I have no objections to this. Have made up this summary as the shortest. Should I receive more letters, and I have some unanswered, will at once send the information to you.

Am in strong hopes yet that the burial place of the crew members may be located and do believe that the plane wreckage or debris may be of help in establishing this, and for that reason I am asking close attention to the bits of information concerning place, direction of travel, direction of wind, and all such data as may be helpful in identifying parts of the wreckage.

Should there be any question you may care to ask me would be glad to hear from you. I am also sending a copy of all this to Edward F. Witsell, Major General Adjutant General Office, Room 4633 War Department Muniton Building, Washington, D.C., as I have had some previous correspondence with him. Judge that this will not harm.

Sincerely yours,
/s/ John W. Dickinson, Sr.

Bits of information concerning the mission of May 24, 1944 over Wiener Neustadt, Austria by Squadron 766, Group 461, where it was shot down a B-24 Bomber plane of which the following men were crew members:

- (1) Captain John W. Dickinson, Jr. – 0-429371 – flight or squadron commander and occupying co-pilot's seat. (Lt. Robt. Dymont) – Missing.
- (2) 1st Lieutenant Robert L. Bigelow – 0-682773 – Pilot – Killed.
- (3) 2nd Lieutenant William J. Muller – 0-688385 – Bombardier – Captured as POW and now released.
- (4) 2nd Lieutenant Floyd E. Fisher – 0-695895 – Navigator – Killed.
- (5) T/Sgt. Joseph P. Tarpey – 32276602 – Radio Operator – Killed.
- (6) S/Sgt. Michael T. Paccione – 12218938 – Top turret gunner – Killed.
- (7) S/Sgt. John M. Hourican – 32201231 – Ball turret gunner – Killed.
- (8) S/Sgt. Frank P. Caron – 39269401 – Nose turret gunner – Captured as POW and now released.
- (9) S/Sgt. Robert G. Lane – 39276241 – Tail gunner – Missing.
- (10) S/Sgt. Edwin A. Rudisill – 39272179 – Engineer and top turret gunner – Missing.

Plane number was B-24-H 42-52405 group crew No. 54 Painted in large figures on nose of plane. These numbers confirmed by Muller and Caron. Colonel Frederic E. Glantzberg was Group leader and in command on this mission and says "Ship hit by flak, shortly lost altitude and was observed to blow up." Conflicting statements about number of chutes couldn't observe himself on account being in lead position.

	Rank	Dulag Luft Name	ASN	ME-1234
DATE: 5/24/44 1115	2nd Lt.	Muller, William John	0-688385	*
PLACE: 1 km W. Sigless	S/Sgt.	Rudisill		Missing
TYPE: Liberator	2nd Lt.	Bigelow, Robert L.	0-682773	Dead
Markings: 252405	2nd Lt.	Fischer, Floyd E.	0-695895	Dead
TARGET: Hq. Air base	S/Sgt.	Hourican, John M.	32201231	Dead
A (0) 1/XVII	S/Sgt.	Tarpey, Joseph P.	32276602	Dead
	S/Sgt.	Paccione, Michael T.	12218938	Dead
	S/Sgt.	Caron, Frank Patrick	39269401	*
	S/Sgt.	Hart, Mervin Stanley	13088409	*
		(98th Bomb Group)		
	S/Sgt.	Lane,		Missing
		5/2/44 Community Cemetery Siegless		

Names: Captain John W. Dickinson, Jr.
S/Sgt. Robert G. Lane
S/Sgt. Edwin A. Rudisill

Organization: 461st Bomb Group 766 Bomb Squadron
Status: MIA Date: 24 May 1944

Area: Wiener Neustadt, Austria

Aircraft: B-1830-42
AAF #42-52405

AFFPA-5 No. 12

DECLARATION

Je soussigne, GILOUSE JULES, demeurant au Puits d'Ancastre, commune de Signes (Var.), declare avoir vu un avion tember en flammes, 13 29 avril 1944, dans la foret, nord du scene de l'accident deux heures après environ. J'ai y ai vu un aviateur americain qui etait fait prisonnier des Allemands. Le Lendemain est venu un grand camion allemande avec un cercueil ou les Allemands ont mis les morceaux des cadavres, les morceaux de plusieurs corps. Le cercueil etait enorme, et huit Allemands l'emportèrent.

/s/ Gilouse Jules

Sworn to and subscribed to me
This ninth day of April, 1945.
/s/ D M Brown
/t/ D M BROWN, Capt, AC
Investigating Officer
WITNESS: /s/ G J Nardo

TRANSLATION

I, the undersigned, GILOUSE JULES, dwelling at Puits d'Ancastre, Commune of Signes (Var), declare that I saw a plane fall in flames on 29 April 1944, in the forest north of Le Beausset, the town where I was at the moment. I arrived on the scene of the accident about two (2) hours later. There I saw an American aviator who had been made a prisoner by the Germans. The next day a large German truck came with a casket into which the Germans put the pieces of the corpses, the pieces of several bodies. The casket was enormous, and eight Germans carried it.

/s/ Gilouse Jules

A TRUE AND LITERAL TRANLATION:
/s/ G J Nardo
/t/ G J NARDO, Staff Sergeant, Air Corps.

A TRUE AND CERTIFIED COPY:

D M BROWN, Capt, AC
Investig. O.

EXHIBIT "A"

2nd Lt. Floyd E. Fisher

Mrs. Dorothy A. Fisher (Wife)
328 East Second
Ottumwa, Iowa

Capt. John W. Dickinson, Jr.

Mrs. Mary L. Dickinson (Mother)
207 McLemore Street
Brownsville, Tennessee

1st Lt. Robert L. Bigelow

Mrs. Florence C. Bigelow (Mother)
1208 North Main
Roswell, New Mexico

2nd Lt. William J. Muller

Mr. Anthony J. Muller (Father)
1745 Guilbert

Louisville, Kentucky

T/Sgt. Joseph P. Tarpey

Mrs. Maria B. Tarpey (Wife)
405 Jefferson Avenue
Dunallen, New Jersey

S/Sgt. Michael T. Paccione

Mr. Joseph Paccione (Father)
236 Schenectady Avenue
Brooklyn, New York

S/Sgt. John M. Hourican

Mr. Mark A. Hourican (Father)
3055 49th Street
Long Island City, New York

S/Sgt. Frank P. Caron

Mrs. Nettia N. Caron (Mother)
349 ½ Wisconsin Ave.
Long Beach, California

S/Sgt. Robert G. Lane

Mr. Thomas Lane (Father)
1331 Oak Street
Los Angeles, Calif.

S/Sgt. Edwin A. Rudisill

Mrs. Sibyl Rudisill (Mother)
Star, Idaho

AG 360.33/300 – C. Wrapper Ind.
HQ., NATOUSA, APO 534, US Army, 6 June 1944.

OE/rf

TO: CG, Army Air Forces, Washington 25, D.C. (Att: Statistical Control Div.)

/s/ O.E.

766TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON
461ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF

APO #520, c/o PM
New York, New York
27 May 1944

AG 360.33

SUBJECT: Missing Air Crew Report.

TO: Commanding Officer, 461st Bombardment Group,
APO #520, c/o PM, New York, New York.

1. In compliance with Letter, 15th Air Force, file AG 360.33 dtd. 5 January 1944, subject: Preparation of Missing Air Crew Reports, submitted herewith is Missing Air Crew Report for B-24 **42-52405**, **1st Lt. Bigelow, Robert L.** and crew.
2. Subject crew personnel are battle casualties as defined by Paragraph 2, Section II, Circular No. 10, Headquarters, NATOUSA.
3. Battle Casualty Report forwarded your headquarters **25 May 1944**.

For the Squadron Commander:

/s/ Robert A. Preciado
1st Lt., AC,
Adjutant

AG 360.33
Headquarters, 461st Bomb Group, APO 520, U.S. Army, 27 May 1944.

1st Ind.

LCP/rfq

TO: CO, 49th Bombardment Wing, APO 520, U.S. Army.

Forwarded for necessary action.

For the Group Commander:

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

HEADQUARTERS
BASE INTELLIGENCE OFFICE
BOWMAN FIELD, LOUISVILLE 5, KENTUCKY

28 June 1945

In reply
Refer to: 383.6

SUBJECT: Casualty Information

TO: Commanding General
Army Air Forces
Washington 25, DC

ATTENTION: AC/AS, Personnel, Personal Affairs Division

1. 2d Lt William J Muller, ASN 0688385, a former prisoner of war at Stalag Luft I, Barth, Germany, and now on leave in Louisville, Kentucky, has requested the assistance of this office in reporting the status of several of his crew members who, it is believed, are being carried on the missing-in-action rolls.

2. Subject officer was bombardier of a B-24H of the 766th Bomb Sq (H), 461st Bomb Gp (H), 15th AF, on a mission over Wiener-Neustadt on 24 May 1944. The plane, hit by flak, blew up, and according to subject officer he and the nose-gunner, S Sgt Frank Caron, ASN unknown, were the sole survivors.

3. All other crew members have subsequently been reported killed in action with the exception of Capt J W Dickinson Jr, ASN 0-429371, pilot; S Sgt Edwin A Rudisill, ASN unknown, flight engineer, and S Sgt Robert G Lane, ASN unknown, tail gunner. According to the father of Capt Dickinson, these latter three men are being carried as missing-in-action.

4. Lt Muller is in receipt of requests from the father of Capt Dickinson and the father of S Sgt Lane for information regarding their sons, and is naturally reticent over releasing it prior to War Department confirmation of their status.

5. Subject officer resides at 1745 Gaulbert Street, Louisville, Kentucky. Mr. John W. Dickinson resides at Brownsville, Tennessee. No other addresses are available.

6. Forwarded for your information and any action you deem advisable.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

/s/ Leo D Carl
Captain, Air Corps
Asst Base Intelligence Officer