

of Carlson and Goldman blocking the exit through the bomb bay, trapping the two men left in the nose section. #26 fell off to the right side, went under Chalmer's plane, the fuel tanks exploded breaking off a wing. The aircraft now in parts fluttered to the ground.

Cap Robert T. Chalmers flying in number two position reports seeing the explosion of bomber 42-52025. The crew of Chalmer's aircraft reported seeing 10 men leave the aircraft.

Germans reported aircraft down at 12 noon. Route: "direct on a line east of Vienna." Chalmer's gunner saw Smith's aircraft crash near Brunn, CZ (Brno). Germans found five KIA, Carlson, Goldman, Brewer, Abramson, and Howard in the wreck. The Copilot Vroom L Francisco evidently escaped meeting Phillip Crossman's crew at Stalag Luft One.



*Crewmen examine bomb damage on a 461st Bomb Group B-24. An anti aircraft shell entered the bomb bay from below exploding on the opposite side.*

42-50953

B-24J 461st BG 765 Squadron "Flying Finger." Pilot: 2/Lt Phillip J. Crossman, Lima, Ohio, Single, 10 Missions. Last sighted at 1145, Muglitz, Germany. Shot down about 1200 about eight miles SW of Kutzendorf, CZ (CZ Police reported) Just minutes from IP. Four bodies found in the wreckage.

The "Flying Finger" was flying number three position, Capt. Robert T. Chalmers who was flying number two position reported Capt. Jack Riley (gunnery officer 0560800) was in upper turret when B-24 left formation. According to Chalmers the formation was hit by 50 plus fighters in the Muglitz area. Sgt Bernard C. Freeman, tail gunner on "Flying Finger" said, "Got him!", but sounded like he himself was hit bad. Freeman shot down an Me-109.

The Ball turret was up at time of fighter attack. Crew unable to get it into action before order to bail out came. Enemy fighters cries-crossed underneath the bomber almost at will. "Tail shot up bad, controls were very bad. Ship in very bad shape." Navigator said, I gave Crossman a heading to fly towards the Russian lines, then the interphone went out. "Aircraft riddled, went down fast." Crew started to bail out at 22,000, last one out at 1,500. Ball, tail, both waist gunners went in with bomber. Most of crew rounded up by Germans at 2 PM.

42-95304,

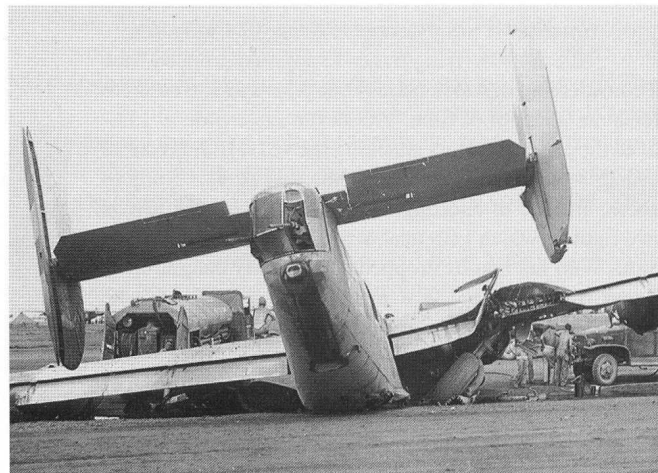
B-24J, 461st, 766th Sq. 2/Lt Nicholas Sidovar Single, Algha, NJ Commanding. Down 20 miles SW of Agram, Hungary. Last radio contact 12:45 PM. South of Bratislava, CZ bomber was hit by fighters just before target. Tried to feather one engine after leaving target, dropped out of formation. 1/Lt Jay M. Garner contacted Sidovar on "A" channel about 20 minutes after target. Sidovar reported engine would not stay feathered and was vibrating badly. Also had a slight gas leak. Sidovar called for fighter escort and finally contacted fighters by radio. At this time he was just south of Bratislava, CZ and holding at 14,300 feet. German records report Sidovar down at 2PM. Weather: 8/10, cumulus at 16,000. Entire crew survived the war and returned to the States.

42-51322

B-24J 461BG 767Sq. #66 Pilot 1/Lt Charles V. Lang Jr. Carrollton, AL, Married, Last sighted 1200, Muglitz 49-47'N 16-56'E. Down 1230

Aircraft left formation 150 miles NW of Budapest. Navigator, Arthur W. Mohlman, says we left the formation 50 north of Lake Ballaton.

S/Sgt Robert F. Miller tail gunner in lead ship in formation, #66 was 600-700 yards behind the formation at the time of the first attack. T/Sgt H.N. Ryan, in bomber #60, "#66 went under our aircraft. All engines were going and no fighters were after him--then an FW-190 went down after #66." T/S Russell H. Ritchel, right waist, #63 in number 2 position, C Flight, first section. (767), "#66 pulled up along side of us from the rear with a fighter on his tail. Fire and smoke were coming from #3 engine. Cpl. Guy V. Bosso, right waist gunner, says Lang ordered him to check on fuel leak in bomb bays and bailed out over Adony, Hungary. #66 peeled off to right and fell away. The enemy fighter on his tail burst into flames. #66 fell about 500 yards, blew up and fell in two pieces. Entire crew got out and 7 were captured about 345PM. German reports note, Cpl. James M. Rutter, "Refuses to talk!" Crewmen will not even reveal type of aircraft they were flying. Lang and 3 others were picked up by Russians and returned to 15AF. Route: W-NW of Budapest. Bomber #66, 2Lt Charles V. Lang Jr. #66 went under



*461st BG B-24 hits hard coming back from a mission, causing a side load stress that collapses the landing gear. The ground crew is removing any fuel remaining in the tanks before hauling it off to the boneyard to be scrapped.*