

10499

461 Bomb Gp.

764 Bomb Sq.

Bombing

Heavy layer of clouds - Visibility poor.

9 March 1945

Podgorski Channel off Southern Yugoslavia

Bomber collided with another ship in formation while passing thru clouds

B-24

11

0

11

Lalewicz, Chester J.

1/Lt.

0-327013

KIA 9 Mar 45

Ivyson, Henry H.

2/Lt.

0-826975

KIA 9 Mar 45

Grzeszczak, John E.

2/Lt.

0-2001250

KIA 9 Mar 45

Klein, Louis

2/Lt.

0-874776

KIA 9 Mar 45

Wood, James L.

S/Sgt.

14056656

KIA 9 Mar 45

Wood, Oscar F.

S/Sgt.

14057900

KIA 9 Mar 45

Catlett, Noval M.

Sgt.

38109157

KIA 9 Mar 45

Smith, Donald J.

S/Sgt.

33494160

KIA 9 Mar 45

Walker, George L.

Sgt.

38607356

KIA 9 Mar 45

Reiser, John C.

S/Sgt.

36305344

KIA 9 Mar 45

Bell, Robert W.

Sgt.

34888699

KIA 9 Mar 45

Air Corps Historical Records

MACR #16499

461ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP
764TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON

MISSION - GRAZ

9 March 1945

1st Lt.	Lalewicz, Chester J.	0-827013	FLORENCE
2nd Lt.	Ivyson, Henry H.	0-826975	FLORENCE
2nd Lt.	Grzeszek, John E.	0-2001250	FLORENCE
2nd Lt.	Klein, Louis	0-674776	FLORENCE
S/Sgt.	Wood, James L.	14,056,656	- FLORENCE
S/Sgt.	Wood, Oscar F.	14,057,900	FLORENCE
Sgt.	Catlett, Noval M.	38,109,157	FLORENCE
S/Sgt.	<u>Smith, Donald J.</u>	<u>33,494,160</u>	FLORENCE
Sgt.	Walker, George L.	38,607358	FLORENCE
S/Sgt.	Reiser, John C.	36,305,344	FLORENCE
Sgt. Bell	<u>Bell, Robert W.</u>	<u>34,888,699</u>	FLORENCE

The crew members listed above was KIA 9 March 1945

ALL MEMORIALIZED AT AMERICAN
CEMENTARY - FLORENCE

764th BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
461st BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520, c/o PM, NYC, NY

20 March 1945

Mrs. Hazel M. Bell
Box 27, Star Route,
Waverly, Tennessee

Dear Mrs. Bell,

Although you have already been notified of the fact that your son, Sgt. Robert W. Bell, 34888699, has made the supreme sacrifice by giving his life for his country, knowing Robert and being familiar with the surrounding circumstances, I am taking this opportunity to try to enlighten you on some of the facts.

Our planes were returning from a combat mission. Near the southern part of Yugoslavia it was necessary for them to pass through a heavy layer of clouds. During the short time the planes passed through the clouds, the plane your son was in and another plane in the formation collided in mid-air. The tail surface of Sgt Bell's plane was torn away and the ship immediately went into a spin. Witnesses state that no one got out and that the plane exploded upon striking the surface of the water, therefore we must assume that no one survived.

An even more formidable foe to the combat flyer than the enemy is bad weather, and to this alone we must attribute the accident which caused the collision of the two airplanes. Both pilots were capable flyers for whom we have always held the highest regard, and the accident can in no way be considered anything but one of those unfortunate incidents that seem to accompany war.

If the remains of your son should be recovered at a later date, he will be buried with military honors and you will be notified promptly as to the place of burial.

The death of Sgt Bell is mourned by a host of friends here in the Squadron. Should you care to contact one of his most intimate friends, I am enclosing his name and address:
S/Sgt. Joseph C. Misgalecki, 36654183
764th Bomb Sq., 461st Bomb Gp.
APO 520, c/o PM, NYC, NY

Believe me, I wish there were something more I could add which would comfort you in your sorrow, but we must console ourselves in the fact that no more can be asked of any man than that he lay down his life for his country.

Sincerely yours,
JOHN THOMMERSHAUSSER
Capt, Air Corps, Comdg

FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE

Office of the Commanding General

APO 520

20 March 1945

Mrs. Hazel M. Bell
Star Route, Box #27
Waverly, Tennessee

My dear Mrs. Bell:

It is regrettable that I must confirm the notification which you have received from the War Department concerning your son, Sergeant Robert W. Bell, 34838699, who was killed in action on March 9, 1945.

Bob was flying aboard a Liberator which was returning from a combat mission, on the above date. While over Yugoslavia, the bomber collided with another ship in the formation. Because of the serious damage, your son's plane fell from the flight at once and went into a spin. None of the air-men escaped from the stricken aircraft before it finally crashed into the Podgoraki Channel off the coast of Yugoslavia. All on board were killed instantly.

Your son's personal effects have been assembled and will be sent to the Effects Quartermaster, Army Effects Bureau, Kansas City, Missouri. From that point, they will be forwarded to you.

In recognition of the fine service he has rendered his country while participating in many hazardous combat missions, Bob has been awarded the Air Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster. I am proud to have had him as a member of my command. Please accept my most profound sympathy in this, your hour of deep bereavement.

Very sincerely yours,

N. F. TWINING
Major General, USA
Commanding