

DECLASSIFIED
 Authority: NND 735001
 By: NARA NARA Date: 1973

CONFIDENTIAL 10681-7

MISSING AIR CREW REPORT

1. OPERATIONAL INFORMATION: Location Castelluccio, Italy Command or Air Force 15th Air Force
 Squadron 726th Bomb Sq (H)
 Base 7330L 1620E 4610N 1643E
 Type of mission Bombing 5016N 1723E to Targ.

2. WEATHER: Clear, Visibility Good.

3. GIVE: (a) Date 17 Dec 44 Time 1256 Last known position 50° 31' N, 18° 08' E.
 (b) Specify whether: (X) Last sighted, () Forced down, () Seen to crash,
 () Last contacted by radio, () No information.

4. AIRCRAFT (LOST) (BELIEVED LOST) AS A RESULT OF: (check one only)
 () Enemy aircraft, () Enemy anti-aircraft, (X) Other Plane collided with another aircraft in same flight.

5. AIRCRAFT: Type, model & series B-24 J AAF Serial Number 42-52045

6. NICKNAME OF AIRCRAFT ---

7. ENGINES: Type, model & series R-1830-65 AAF Serial Number (a) RP 448520
 (b) EP-448596 (c) F48C-2-66 (d) BP-448704

8. INSTALLED WEAPONS: (Make, type and serial number)
 (a) MG Browning, M-2, 1759020 (c) MG, Browning, M-2, 1757620(i) MG Browning M-2 1757405
 (b) MG Browning, M-2, 1516738 (d) MG, Browning, M-2, 1757921(i) MG Browning M-2 1757974
 (e) MG Browning, M-2, 1758799 (f) MG, Browning, M-2, 1757623(k)
 (g) MG Browning, M-2, 1758074 (h) MG, Browning, M-2, 179787Q(i)

9. PERSONNEL LISTED BELOW REPORTED AS: (X) Battle Casualty, () Non-Battle Casualty.

10. NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew 11; Passengers --; Total 11
 (If more than 12 persons aboard aircraft, use separate sheet.)

CREW POSITION	RANK	FULL NAME (Last, first, initial)	SERIAL NUMBER	CURRENT NEXT OF KIN, RELATIONSHIP STATUS AND ADDRESS
(1) Pilot	<u>1st Lt.</u>	<u>Shelton, William F.</u>	<u>0-828719</u>	<u>MIA Mrs Constance Shelton (Wife) 629 W. Matthews Ave. Jonesboro, Ark.</u>
(2) Co-pilot	<u>1st Lt.</u>	<u>Atterholt, Charles W.</u>	<u>0-706300</u>	<u>MIA Mrs Arlene E. Atterholt (Wife) 531 W. Lincoln Way, Lisbon, Ohio.</u>
(3) Navigator	<u>2nd Lt.</u>	<u>Becker, Eugene F.</u>	<u>0-2060765</u>	<u>MIA Mrs Regina Becker (Wife) 95 Greenwood Dr., Millburn, N. J.</u>
(4) Bombardier	<u>2nd Lt.</u>	<u>Sullivan, John L., Jr.</u>	<u>0-158624</u>	<u>MIA Mrs Mary Ellen Sullivan (Mother) 120 So. Shrovet, Quincy, Mass.</u>
(5) Top Turret Gunner	<u>Sgt.</u>	<u>Pierce, Homer D.</u>	<u>18178158</u>	<u>MIA Mrs. Bertha Pierce (Mother) Gen. Delivery, Royce City, Texas.</u>
(6) Lower Turret Gunner	<u>Sgt.</u>	<u>Decaris, Albert J.</u>	<u>39917668</u>	<u>MIA Mrs. Dominick Decaris (Father) 208 W. Oak St., Ogden, Utah.</u>
(7) P. Waist Gunner	<u>S/Sgt.</u>	<u>Hattersley, Joseph W. Jr.</u>	<u>35389008</u>	<u>MIA Mrs. Doris S. Hattersley (Wife) 402 Fredrick Road, Gatonsville, Md.</u>
(8) L. Waist Gunner	<u>S/Sgt.</u>	<u>Ershler, William C.</u>	<u>15103859</u>	<u>MIA Mrs. Mack Ershler (Father) 104 Robert St., Waterbury, Conn.</u>
(9) Tail Gunner	<u>S/Sgt.</u>	<u>Kelly, George M.</u>	<u>32974441</u>	<u>MIA Mrs. Anna Kelly (Mother) 580 W. 176 St., New York, N. Y.</u>
(10) Nose Gunner	<u>S/Sgt.</u>	<u>Anderman, Edward G.</u>	<u>18149441</u>	<u>MIA Mrs Josephine Anderman (Mother) Westwego, La.</u>
(11) Radio Operator	<u>Sgt.</u>	<u>Bolger, Robert J.</u>	<u>12091349</u>	<u>MIA Mr. Thomas A. Bolger (Father) Tuxter Road, E. Irvington, N.Y.</u>

12. IDENTIFY BELOW THOSE PERSONS WHO ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE LAST KNOWLEDGE OF AIRCRAFT AND CHECK APPROPRIATE (one only) COLUMN TO INDICATE BASIS FOR SAME: SAW

NAME IN FULL	RANK	SERIAL No.	CONTACTED BY RADIO	LAST SIGHTED	SAW CRASH	FORCED LANDING
(1) <u>McHale, Thomas E.</u>	<u>S/Sgt</u>	<u>32625830</u>			<u>X</u>	
(2)						
(3)						

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.
 (X) Other reasons (specify) Plane was still under control when last sighted. Only 3 eights were

14. ATTACH PHOTOGRAPH, SKETCH OR DRAWING SHOWING LAST KNOWN LOCATION OF AIRCRAFT, USED.

15. ATTACH EYEWITNESS DESCRIPTIONS OF CRASH, FORCED LANDING, OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES.

16. ATTACH A DESCRIPTIVE COPY OF REPORT OF SEARCH, IF ANY, AND GIVE NAME, RANK AND SERIAL NUMBER OF OFFICER IN CHARGE OF SEARCH HERE. No search made. Plane last sighted over enemy territory.

17. INCLUSIONS:
 Incl 1 - 1st Lt. 17 Dec 1944
 Incl 2 - Eye witness statement CONFIDENTIAL
 Incl 3 - Statement of S-2 Officer.

Signature of reporting officer
BEVERLY V. PEARSON
 Major, Air Corps,
 Executive Officer. 13

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10682-3

726TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
451ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 U.S. ARMY

18 December 1944

EYE-WITNESS STATEMENT

I, Staff Sergeant Thomas E. McHale, 32625830, was tail gunner on an airplane in the same flight as First Lieutenant William T. Shelton, flying aircraft number 42-52045. On 17 December 1944, Lieutenant Shelton lead our flight on a mission over the Odertal Oil Plant in Germany. Shortly after passing over the target I saw Lieutenant Shelton veer off to the right and the number two ship tried to fly over him to take over the lead. As the number two ship let down his tail hit the number one propeller of Lieutenant Shelton's airplane as Lieutenant Shelton was coming back into his former position. I last saw Lieutenant Shelton's aircraft at about 1256 hours, at approximately 50° 31'N, 18° 08'E, in Germany. The weather was clear and I saw three parachutes leave the aircraft, which appeared to be under control.

*Thomas E. McHale*THOMAS E. McHALE,
S/Sgt., Air Corps.~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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C O N F I D E N T I A L726TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
451ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 U.S. ARMY

10681-4X

18 December 1944

S T A T E M E N T

First Lieutenant William T. Shelton, O-823719, was pilot of aircraft number 42-52045, no nickname, on a combat mission to bomb the Odertal Oil Plant, in Germany, on 17 December 1944. Lieutenant Shelton was flying in the number one position of his flight. After passing over the target the formation started the rally to clear additional anti-aircraft fire. During the turn Lieutenant Shelton appeared to pull out of the formation and the number two ship moved in to take over the lead. At this time Lieutenant Shelton moved back into his original position, flying underneath the former number two ship. Lieutenant Shelton's number one propeller came into contact with the tail of the other airplane, cutting it almost completely off. The other aircraft went into a spin and was seen to crash and burst into flame. Lieutenant Shelton was last sighted at about 1256 hours, apparently still under control, at approximately 50° 31'N, 18° 08'E, in Germany. The weather was clear at this time. Three parachutes were seen to leave the aircraft.

Nothing further has been heard from Lieutenant Shelton or his crew and the undersigned has no opinion as to their fate.

Lawrence E. Robertson
LAWRENCE E. ROBERTSON,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Intelligence Officer.

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