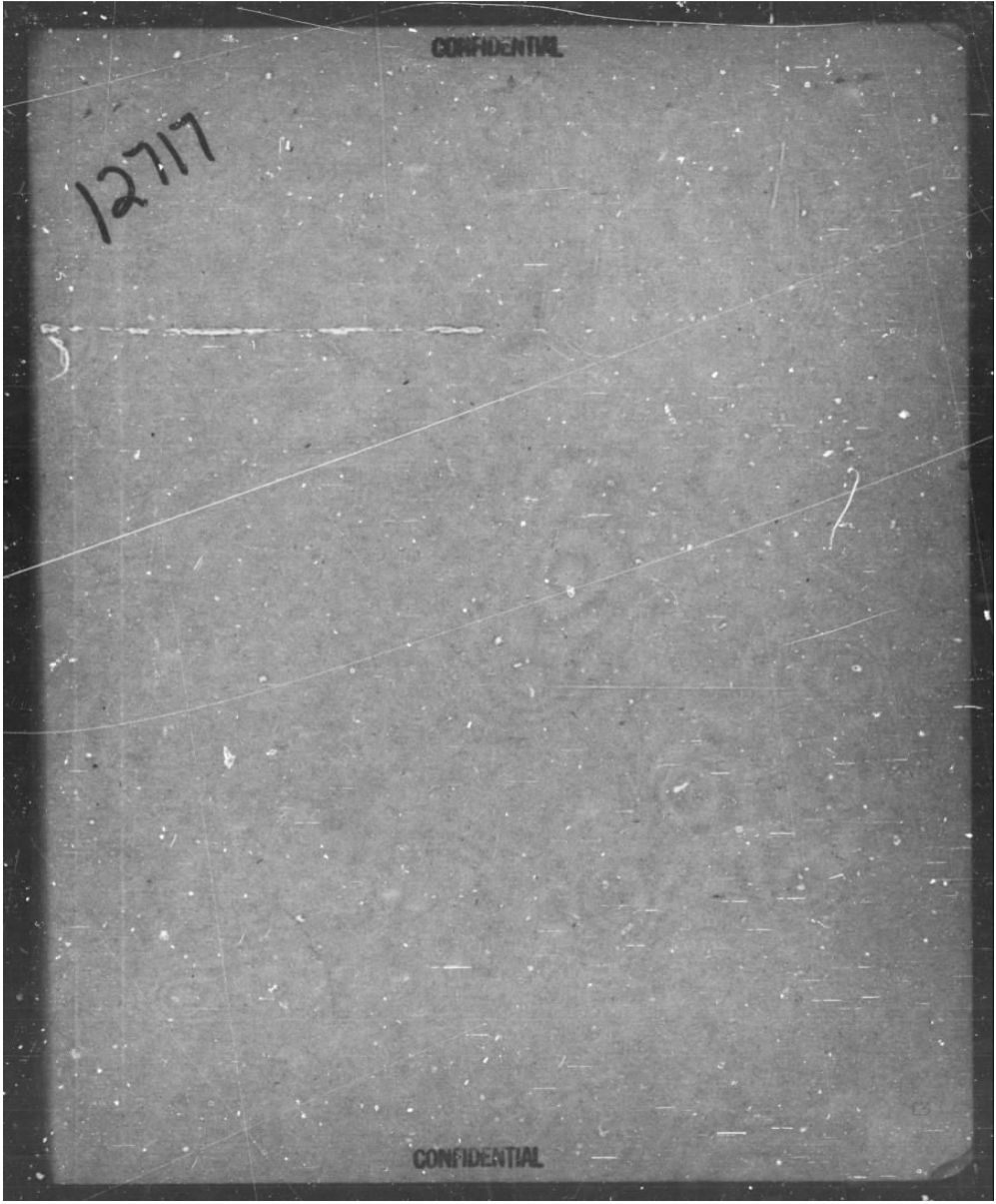


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MISSING AIR CREW REPORT 2349 12717

1. ORGANIZATION, Location Castelluccio, Italy Command or Air Force 18th Air Force
Group 41st Bombardment Group (H) Squadron 726th Bombardment Sq (H)

2. SPECIFY: Place of departure Castelluccio, Italy Course _____
 Target Belgrado, Italy Type of mission Bombing

3. WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED:
 Weather Clear Visibility Fair

4. GIVE: (a) Date 28 Feb 1945 Time 1225 Last known position 35° 00' N, 14° 50' E
 (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 L AAF Serial Number 44-49559

7. NICKNAME OF AIRCRAFT _____

8. ENGINES: Type, model & series B-24 L AAF Serial Number (a) CP 31760
 (b) CP 31761 (c) CP 31760 (d) CP 31814

9. INSTALLED WEAPONS: (Make, type and serial number)
 (a) _____ (b) _____ (c) _____
 (d) _____ (e) _____ (f) _____

10. PERSONNEL LISTED BELOW REPORTED AS: Battle Casualty, Non Battle Casualty.

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

CREW POSITION	FULL NAME (Last, First, Initial)	RANK, SERIAL NUMBER	CURRENT NEXT OF KIN, RELATIONSHIP STATUS AND ADDRESS
1) Pilot	<u>Owens, William C.</u>	<u>1st Lt O-111066</u>	<u>NYA</u>
2) Co-Pilot	<u>Lancis III, Wayne A.</u>	<u>1st Lt O-720546</u>	<u>NYA</u>
3) Bombardier	<u>Kling, Harry C.</u>	<u>2nd Lt O-2063260</u>	<u>NYA</u>
4) Navigator	<u>Ginsberg, Harold A.</u>	<u>2nd Lt O-2001872</u>	<u>NYA</u>
5) Top Turret Gunner	<u>Uebelhor, Rudolph F.</u>	<u>1st Sgt 1604959</u>	<u>NYA</u>
6) Middle Turret Gunner	<u>Turrill, Westrich, Mike E.</u>	<u>Sgt 3870983</u>	<u>NYA</u>
7) Tail Gunner	<u>Walsh, V. Berkeley Albert J.</u>	<u>Sgt 4208786</u>	<u>NYA</u>
8) Observer	<u>Welch & Mills, Robert J.</u>	<u>Cpl 1610898</u>	<u>NYA</u>
9) Tail Gunner	<u>Vpham, Gilbert L.</u>	<u>Sgt 11140962</u>	<u>NYA</u>
10) Observer	<u>Blackburn, Frederick D.</u>	<u>Sgt 3476169</u>	<u>NYA Mrs. Maggie M. Blackburn (Mother) Rt #6, Garden City, Savannah, Ga.</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.

NAME IN FULL	RANK	SERIAL No.	CONTACTED LAST BY RADIO	SAW CRASH	SAW FORCED LANDING
<u>Owens, William C.</u>	<u>1st Lt</u>	<u>O-111066</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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.
 Other reasons (specify) _____

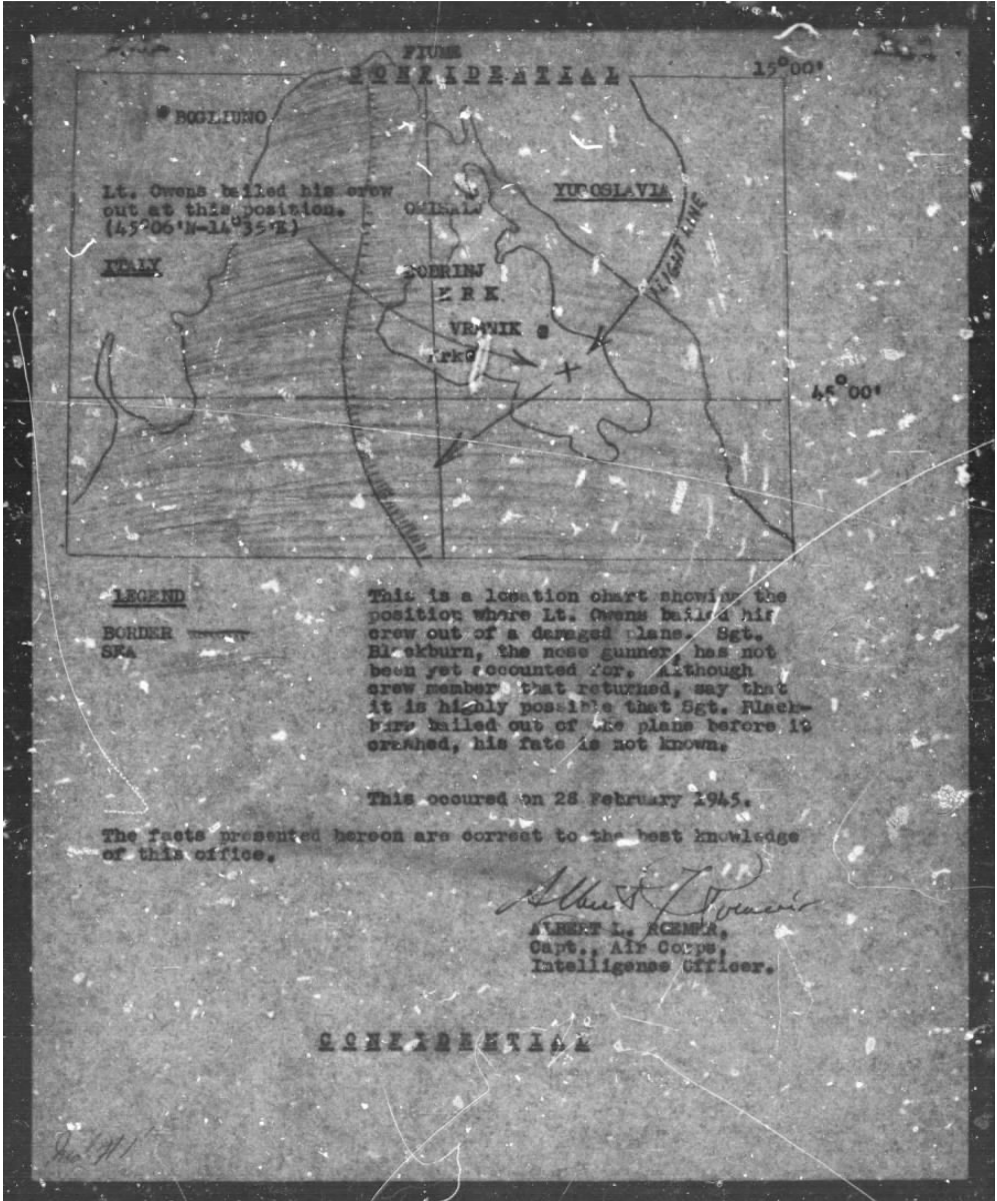
14. ATTACH PHOTOGRAPH, MAP OR SKETCH SHOWING LAST KNOWN LOCATION OF AIRCRAFT.
 15. ATTACH EYEWITNESS DESCRIPTION OF CRASH, FORCED LANDING, OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES.
 16. ATTACH A DESCRIPTION OF EXTENT OF SEARCH, IF ANY, AND GIVE NAME, RANK AND SERIAL NUMBER OF OFFICER IN CHARGE OF SEARCH HERE. No search made. Plane last sighted over enemy territory.

3- Enclosures: Incl 2- Sketch Date 4 March 1945 Albert J. Walsh territory.
 Incl 3- Eyewitness Statement ALBERT J. WALSH
 Incl 3- Statement of S-2 Officer CONFIDENTIAL Captain, Air Corps, Adjutant.

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By: NARA NARA Date: 1973

CONFIDENTIALEYE-WITNESS STATEMENT

4 March 1945

On 28 February 1945, I, WILLIAM CODY OWENS, O-1110166, First Lieutenant, Air Corps, 726th Bombardment Squadron, 451st Bombardment Group (H), was piloting plane #44-49539 on a mission to bomb a target at Bolzano, Italy. We completed our bomb run, and was on our return to the home base. We suffered severe flak damages to our plane in the target area, and on the way back three engines failed. I had already given a ten minute warning to be ready to bail out and a three minute notice to prepare for jumping. We were at an altitude of 7,000 feet over the island of Krk, Yugoslavia. I rang the bell, which was a signal for bailing out, then I waited one minute and not seeing anyone in the plane except myself, I left the ship. While floating down, I counted the chutes in the air and I counted only nine, including my own. After reaching the ground, I got together with the rest of the crew, and all of us agreed that we had only seen nine parachutes come out of the plane. None of us had seen the plane crash, although I nosed it down so it would crash in the sea. The next day I was told by some of the people on the island, that after the plane had gone out of sight across some mountains, another chute was seen to come out of the plane, and that he had broken a leg in landing, but was under medical care of friendly allies. The source also said that the soldier was to be turned over to proper authorities as soon as it was possible to evacuate him. I do not know whether the source is reliable or not, so I cannot verify this to be the truth, however it is very possible that it could have been Sergeant Blackburn, the missing man in the crew. Sergeant Blackburn was flying as my nose-gunner.

William C. Owens
WILLIAM CODY OWENS,
1st Lt., Air Corps.

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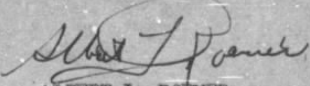
By: NARA NARA Date: 1973

C O N F I D E N T I A L726TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
Office of the Intelligence Officer
APO 520 U.S. Army

4 March 1945

STATEMENT OF CIRCUMSTANCES

First Lieutenant William C. Owens, O-111016\$, was pilot of a B-24 type aircraft, AAF serial number 44-49539, on a combat mission to bomb the Bolzano, Italy Marshalling Yards on 28 February 1945. Over the target, Lieutenant Owens was forced to feather an engine as a result of severe flak damages to his plane. Later, on the return route, more trouble with two other engines made it impossible for Lieutenant Owens to keep the damaged plane in the air any longer, and he gave the signal for his crew to bail out. They were at an altitude of 7,000 feet over the island of Krk, Yugoslavia. Lieutenant Owens waited for a minute after the warning had been given to bail out, and then seeing no other person in the plane except himself, he also left the ship. On reaching the ground, he collected his crew and they all said that each of them had seen only nine parachutes come out of the plane. The man unaccounted for was Staff Sergeant Fredrick D. Blackburn, who had flown as the nose-gunner. None of them had seen the plane crash, although Lieutenant Owens had set the controls so it would crash in the sea. The next day, people on the island who said that they had witnessed the incident, reported that after the plane had gone over some mountains, another chute had come out of it and the person had broken his leg on landing. The source said that he was in medical care of friendly Allies and he would be placed in the hands of proper authorities as soon as he could be evacuated. Since the reliability of the source could not be determined, the crew members could not accept this as being the authentic truth, but each thought from the description given, it was very possible that it might have been Sergeant Blackburn. Since their return to this base, Lieutenant Owens and the others of his crew have been thoroughly interrogated and the convictions are same for each member. Nothing further has been heard from the missing man, and the undersigned has no other comment or any opinion as to his fate.


ALBERT L. ROMMER,
Capt, Air Corps,
Intelligence Officer.C O N F I D E N T I A L

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