

DECLASSIFIED BY AUTHORITY OF NND DECLASSIFICATION PROJECT 785072,
H.D. MAYER, NARS, SEPTEMBER 10, 1982.

9716

Classification changed

By E. A. BRADUNAS, Lt. Col., AO

By Wm. L. THOMAS, 1st Lt. AO

Date MAR 15 1948

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MISSING AIR CREW REPORT

9716

- ORGANIZATION: Location APO 520, U. S. Army Command or Air Force 15th Air Force
Group 464th Bombardment Group (H) Squadron 776th Bombardment Sq (H)
- SPECIFY: Place of departure AAB, Pantanella, Italy Course E.N.E.
Target Pibesti, Rumania (Romans Americana
Oil Refinery) Type of mission Bombing
- WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED:
Weather - Slight Haze Visibility about 20 Miles
- GIVE: (a) Date 22 July 1944 Time 1147 Last known position 42° 22' N - 24° 25' E
(b) Specify whether: (x) Last sighted, () Forced down, () Seen to crash,
() Last contacted by radio, () No information.
- AIRCRAFT (LOST) (BELIEVED LOST) AS A RESULT OF: (check one only)
() Enemy aircraft, (x) Enemy anti-aircraft, () Other
- AIRCRAFT: Type, model & series B-24 H AAF Serial Number 42-51136
- NICKNAME OF AIRCRAFT R-1830-43
- ENGINES: Type, model & series R-1830-43 AAF Serial Number (a) EP-401704
(b) EP-401301 (c) EP-401652 (d) EP-401314
- INSTALLED WEAPONS: (Make, type and serial number.) All Browning MG-M2-Cal.50
(a) 96 6516 (e) 965918 (i)
(b) 980373 (f) 983451 (j)
(c) 1255465 (g) 986374 (k)
(d) 983157 (h) 966504 (l)
- PERSONNEL LISTED BELOW REPORTED AS: (x) Battle Casualty, () Non-Battle Casualty.
- NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew 10; Passengers 0; Total 10
(If more than 12 persons aboard aircraft, use separate sheet.)

ESTIMATED
 by Lt. L. THOMAS, 1st Lt. AG
 15 APR 1948

CREW POSITION	FULL NAME (Last, first, initial) RANK, SERIAL NUMBER	CURRENT STATUS	NEXT OF KIN AND ADDRESS
<i>RACI</i> 1) Pilot	<i>W</i> <u>Eleh, Harold E. Major 0399650</u>	<i>M</i>	<u>Mr. Henry Eleh, Jr. (Father)</u> <u>Route #3, Box 236, Fort Collins, Colorado.</u>
<i>RACI</i> 2) Co-Pilot	<u>Hudson, Guy L. 2d Lt 0699419</u>	<i>M</i>	<u>Mr. Guy L. Hudson, (Father)</u> <u>901 Grand Ave, Edwardsville, Illinois</u>
<i>KIA</i> 3) Navigator	<u>Kahn, Abraham (NMI) 1st Lt 0735376</u>	<i>M</i>	<u>Mr. Paul Kahn, (Father)</u> <u>Woodbourne, New York</u>
<i>RTO</i> 4) Bombardier	<u>Williams, Raymond (NMI) 1st Lt 0668670</u>	<i>M</i>	<u>Mrs. Fannie L. Williams (Mother)</u> <u>2103 South 1st St., Louisville, Ky.</u>
<i>KIA</i> 5) Radio-Op	<u>Ullom, George K. T/Sgt. 15125300</u>	<i>M</i>	<u>Mrs. Beatrice Ullom (Mother)</u> <u>66 South Hague Ave, Columbus, Ohio</u>
<i>KIA</i> 6) Top-Turret-Gun	<u>Straw, Richard D. T/Sgt. 33553790</u>	<i>M</i>	<u>Mrs. Ethel Straw (Mother)</u> <u>2700 Elsinor Ave, Baltimore, Md.</u>
<i>KIA</i> 7) Nose Gunner	<u>Pannone, Ralph (NMI) S/Sgt. 31120375</u>	<i>M</i>	<u>Mrs. Marie Pannone (Mother)</u> <u>1303 Mineral Springs Ave, No. Providence, R.I.</u>
<i>KIA</i> 8) Waist Gunner	<u>Campbell, Ronald Jr. S/Sgt. 17159816</u>	<i>M</i>	<u>Mrs. Margie E. Campbell (Mother)</u> <u>Box 90, RFD, Jefferson City, Mo.</u>
<i>KIA</i> 9) Tail Gunner	<u>Neuhaus, Martin H. S/Sgt. 33586719</u>	<i>M</i>	<u>Mrs. Bella Neuhaus (Mother)</u> <u>3627 North Gratz St, Philadelphia, Pa.</u>
<i>RTO</i> 10) Navigator	<u>Graves, Frank A. 2nd Lt. 0702417</u>	<i>M</i>	<u>Mrs. Dorothy Ann Graves (Wife)</u> <u>RFD #1, Tallulah, Louisiana.</u>

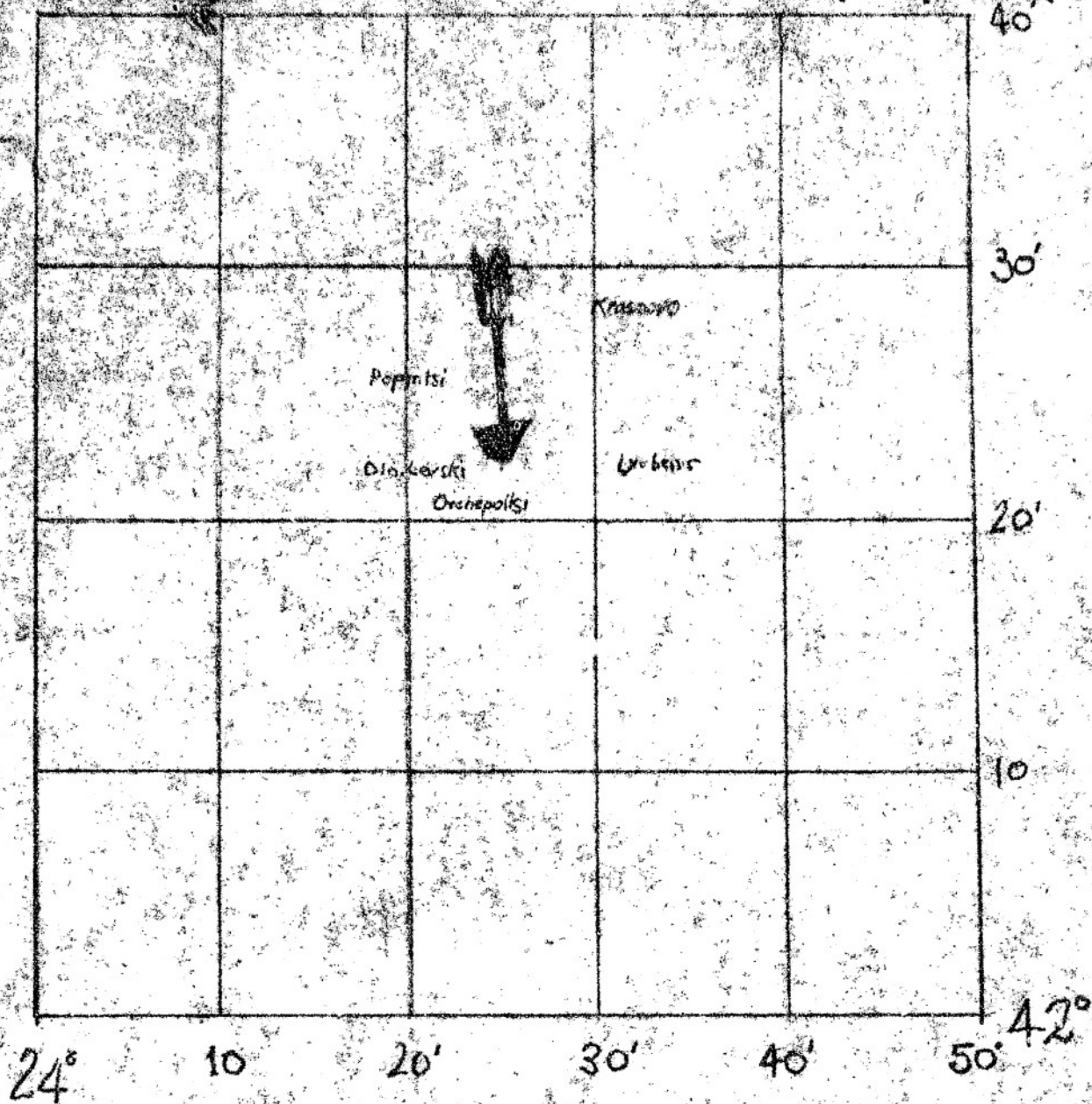
12. IDENTIFY BELOW THOSE PERSONS WHO ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF AIRCRAFT AND CHECK APPROPRIATE (one only) COLUMN TO INDICATE BASIS FOR NAME:

NAME IN FULL	RANK	SERIAL No.	CONTACTED BY RADIO	SAW	FORCED CRASH LANDING
(1) <u>William C. Petty</u>	<u>S/Sgt</u>	<u>18007188</u>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
(2) <u>Gerald A. Meinhard</u>	<u>S/Sgt</u>	<u>32144794</u>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
(3)					

13. IF PERSONNEL ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE SURVIVED, CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:
(1) Parachutes were used () Persons were seen walking away from the scene of () Other reasons (specify):

- ATTACH PHOTOGRAPH, MAP OR SKETCH SHOWING LAST KNOWN LOCATION OF AIRCRAFT.
- ATTACH EYEWITNESS DESCRIPTIONS OF CRASH, FORCED LANDING, OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES.
- 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 could be conducted due to planes being over enemy target in enemy territory.

3 Inclosures.
 Incl 1 - Sketch of Date: 23 July 1944 William H. Redd
 approx location of where aircraft was last seen. Signature of [redacted]
 Incl 2 - Eye witness report of S/Sgt William C. Petty. Captain [redacted]
 Incl 3 - Eye witness report of S/Sgt Gerald A. Meinhard. Squadro [redacted]



ARROW INDICATES POINT WHERE MAJOR BLEH-1'S CREW WERE LAST SIGHTED

BEARING $R4^{\circ}25'E - 42^{\circ}22'N$

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

✓ Maj. Harold E. Blehm	Mr. Henry Blehm, Jr., (father) Route Number Three Box 235, Fort Collins, Colorado. ✓
✓ 1st Lt. Abraham Kahn	Mr. Paul Kahn (father) Woodbourne, New York.
✓ 1st Lt. Raymond Williams ✓	Mrs. Fannie L. Williams (mother) 2130 South First Street, Louisville, Kentucky.
✓ 2nd Lt. Guy L. Hudson	Mr. Guy L. Hudson (father) 901 Grand Avenue, Edwardsville, Illinois.
✓ 2nd Lt. Frank A. Graves	Mrs. Dorothy A. Graves (wife) 602 Jefferson Street, Gretna, Louisiana.
✓ T/Sgt. George K. Wilson ✓	Mrs. Mary V. Wilson (wife) 6125 Montgall, Kansas City, Missouri.
371 ✓ T/Sgt. Richard D. Straw ✓	Mrs. Ethel Straw (mother) 2808 Talbot Road, Baltimore, Maryland. ✓
✓ S/Sgt. Martin E. Neuhans	Mrs. Della Neuhans (mother) 5827 North Gros Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
✓ S/Sgt. Donald Campbell, Jr.,	Mr. Thomas Ronald Campbell (father) Route One, Box 80, Jefferson City, Missouri.
✓ S/Sgt. Ralph Pannone	Mrs. Maria Pannone (mother) 1103 Mineral Spring Avenue, Paw Tucket, Rhode Island. ✓
✓ T/Sgt. Richard D. Straw	Mrs. Thelma Straw, (wife) 2700 Elsinor, Baltimore, Maryland. ✓

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

AG 201 - Campbell, Ronald Jr. (EM) 1st Ind.
HQ FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE, APO 520, 15 November 1944.

GP/B/eh

TO: CG, MTOUSA, APO 512. Att'n: Casualty Branch, AGD.

1. MACR forwarded your headquarters 22 August 1944.

2. 1st Lt. Guy L. Hudson reported that six of his crew members, among them S/Sgt Campbell, left waist gunner, were believed dead. He stated in part, "Of the two waist gunners I know nothing. We were hit very hard by flak before ship went down and they may have been killed in the ship. The Germans reported only six chutes out of our ship. Four are here and one was killed by flak, the other by a bomb". This was not considered by unit commander as sufficient evidence for change of status to KIA.

For the Commanding General:

WINDLE D. REEL,
Major, Air Corps,
Assistant AG.

AG 201-Campbell, Ronald Jr., (Enl)-C 2nd Ind.
(3 Nov 44)
HQ., MTOUSA, APO 512, U. S. Army, 19 November 1944.

JKR/ak

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man*

TO: Commanding General, Army Air Forces, Washington 25, D.C. ✓

MACR forwarded your office 16 November 44.

For the THEATER COMMANDER:

JACK K. ROBERTS,
1st Lt., AGD,
Asst. Adjutant General

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DATE 18 60

15 January 1945

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Dear Sir;

I have been requested to give some information as to where my plane crashed on 22 July 1944 and what happened to the other men on the crew.

The Bomber crashed on 22 July 1944 on a mission to the "Pleesti Oil Fields" approximately one thousand (1,000) yards north of the "Romana Americana Oil Refinery" which is located several miles east of the city, Pleesti.

The Pilot (myself), the Copilot, the Radar Navigator, and the Bombardier are the only known survivors of the crash. I did not know that these men were alive until about a month after the crash, because I had been in a hospital. The Copilot then told me that the Germans had told him of finding an officer dead from a stab wound in the back and identified by his tags as Lt. Kahn. The body of another man had been found but could not be identified because it had been hit by a bomb and mangled beyond recognition. I believe the other men perished in the ship because the ship had gone into a spin before the bail out signal was given and the centrifugal force was too much for them to

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overcome. To bear out the above reasoning I will relate the entire experience to the best of my ability. Our bomb run was from the south and due to a smoke screen put up by the enemy we were forced to drop our bombs by "Back Sides". I was leading the second attack unit of our Group. We had just dropped our bombs and started to rally right when we were hit. I believe that we were hit by Glab but I cannot say exactly where we were hit. The hit must have been very close and the concussion temporarily knocked us all out because I cannot remember leaving the formation. Both engines on the left wing had to be feathered, smoke filled the cabin of the plane, and the control cables must have been cut because I could get no reaction from them when I attempted to keep the wing with the dead engines high. The nose kept coming up and plane went into a steep left turn with the wheel all the way forward and full right rudder and aileron. Then the plane dropped into a slow flat spin to the left. I myself gave the bail out signal which consisted of one long ring of the alarm bell and then started for the bomb bay doors which had not been closed. I was pinned between the seats for two complete turns of the spin.

By applying every ounce of effort I could give I managed to get to the bomb bay and closed the ship. I drifted down into the target area, on the way down I saw one chute above me and one chute below me. I landed about fifteen hundred (1,500) feet to the west and north of the main buildings of the target. I hit the ground very hard and felt something snap in my right ankle. I heard the Anti-Aircraft guns start to fire again so I hunted around until I found a dummy oil tank hole in the ground. There I sat while two Groups bombed the Refinery each time bombs landed on both sides of me. About 10 minutes later I crawled out of the hole and limped into a cornfield about 100 yards farther north I found then that I couldn't walk any more so I limped to the edge of the cornfield and was picked up by the German soldiers about 5 minutes later. I was taken to an Anti Aircraft Battery Headquarters and about an hour later I was taken to a First Aid Station. There I was given a shot, treated for a burn on my right arm and a laceration on my left leg. About three hours later I arrived at a small Romanian Hospital not far from Plestii where my right leg was x-rayed and put into a cast. Two weeks later I was moved

to a military hospital in Bucharest. I remained in that hospital until about the 16th of August. I was then taken to the "Officers Prisoner of War Camp, where I found all that was left of the crew.

During the time, from the 16th to the 23rd of August there were many attempted escapes but none got through. The men could not get food without contacting the lower class of people and when they did they were picked up immediately. The country was also so heavily populated that one could not avoid being seen. Therefore I do not believe that the other four men from my crew could have escaped.

Harold E. Bloom
Major A.C. 0399650.