

DECLASSIFIED

Authority: NND 735001

By: NARA NARA Date: 1973

CONFIDENTIAL

MISSING AIR CREW REPORT

10790

1. ORGANIZATION: 1st Bomb Group Lucera A/D # 8, Italy Command or Air Force 15th AF
by E. A. BRADONAR, Lt. Col. 1st Bomb (H) Squadron 419th Bomb (H)
2. SPECIFIC: Place of departure Lucera A/D # 8, Italy Course Base to Blechhammer Germany
Target North O/R, Germany Type of mission Bombing
3. WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED: CAVU

4. GIVE: (a) Date 2 December 1944 Time 1115A Last known position 42°05N, 16°00E
(b) Specify whether: () Last sighted, () Forced down, (x) 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, (x) Other Engine caught fire, and could not be extinguished
6. AIRCRAFT: Type, model & series B-17G AAF Serial Number 44-6106
7. NICKNAME OF AIRCRAFT None
8. ENGINES: Type, model & series R-1820-97 AAF Serial Number (a) SW-009427
(b) SW-009367 (c) SW-020781 (d) SW-016899
9. INSTALLED WEAPONS: (Make, type and serial number.) All M2 Flex. 50 cal.
(a) 1180486 (e) 1178692 (i) 1178414
(b) 1178601 (f) 1181153 (j) 1177804
(c) 1180757 (g) 1090929 (k) 1178653
(d) 1178576 (h) 1180045 (l) 1177987
10. PERSONNEL LISTED BELOW REPORTED AS: (x) Battle Casualty, () Non-Battle Casualty.
11. NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew 10; Passengers 0; Total 10.
(If more than 12 persons aboard aircraft, use separate sheet.)

CREW FULL NAME (Last, first, initial) CURRENT NEXT OF KIN RELATIONSHIP
POSITION RANK, SERIAL NUMBER STATUS AND ADDRESS

(1) Pilot 1. TILLOTSON, EUGENE F. MIA KIA Mr. John F. Tillotson (Father)
1st Lt. O-813610 811 Harmon, Danville, Illinois.
(2) Co-Pilot 2. PIKKAART, ROBERT L. MIA KIA Mr. Peter Pkkaart (Father)
2nd Lt. O-825721 2616 Kalanco St., Kalamazoo, Mich.
(3) Navigator 3. GRANT, STEPHEN H. MIA KIA Mr. Henry M. Grant (Father)
1st Lt. O-2057905 68 Sunset Ave., Gen Ridge, New Jersey.
(4) Bombardier 4. FERGUSON, WILLIAM N. MIA RTD Mrs. Mary Lulia (Scrogam)
2nd Lt. O-772154 Ferguson, (M) 405 E. Florence, Windsor, Mo.
(5) Engineer 5. DE HART, JOHN H. MIA RTD Mrs. Pearl Ruth Dehart (Mother)
Gnr T/Sgt. 6289672 510 Doucette St., Beaumont, Texas.
(6) Radio Opr. 6. NAGLICH, JOHN (NMI) MIA KIA Mrs. Anna Naglich (Mother)
Gnr Sgt. 17091484 203 E. Sixth St, Walsenburg, Colo.
(7) Waist Gnr 7. PHILLIPS, MILBURN C. MIA KIA Mr. Lawrence G. Phillips (Father)
Sgt. 14163499 304 Wilson St, Alabama City, Alabama.
(8) Waist Gnr 8. MYERS, FRANK L. MIA KIA Mr. James R. Myers (Father)
Sgt. 37499802 Humansville, Missouri.
(9) Tail Gnr 9. GRIGG, J.D. MIA RTD Mrs. Mary Ann Grigg (Mother)
Sgt. 38591688 Box 232, Inola, Oklahoma.
(10) Tail Trt. 10. NOEL, ROBERT M. MIA RTD Mrs. Pearl Noel (Mother)
Gnr M/Sgt 35809045 Mackville, Kentucky.

(11)

(12)

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
CONTACTED LAST SAW FORCED
BY RADIO SIGHTED CRASH LANDING

NAME IN FULL	RANK & SERIAL No.	BY RADIO	SIGHTED	CRASH LANDING
(1) FERGUSON, WILLIAM N.	2nd Lt. O-772154		X	
(2) DeHart, John H.	T/Sgt. 6289672		X	
(3) Noel, Robert M.	M/Sgt. 35809045		X	

13. IF PERSONNEL ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE SURVIVED, CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

() Parachutes were used. () Personnel were seen walking away from the scene of the crash.
() Other reasons (specify) is believed that six (6) of the ten members perished in the water.

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

15. ATTACH EYEWITNESS DESCRIPTIONS 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. The search was made by an Air Sea Rescue

were found. Four (4) were saved, and two (2) bodies were found, but four (4) more are still

Incl 1-Witnesses' Statements. Date 6 December 1944.

Incl 2-Sketch.

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Signature of Reporting Officer
LESLIE W. HOLMAN, Lt. Col., Air Force

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HEADQUARTERS

419TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF

301ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF

APO 520

U.S. ARMY

(E/rms)

4 December 1944

SUBJECT : Witnesses' Statements to Accompany Missing Air Crew Report on
A/C # 44-6186.

TO : Commanding Officer, 301st Bombardment Group (H) AAF.

1. In compliance with ltr., Hq., 301st Bombardment Group, above subject, dated 19 May 1944, the following statements of those witnesses who last saw A/C # 44-6186 on 2 December 1944 are submitted:

a. " I was flying as Bombardier on the missing plane. After about an hour and a half of flying I noticed a strong smell of gasoline fumes. The ball turret gunner called out that the number two engine was leaking gas. We turned back toward base and about fifteen (15) miles from the coast the engine caught fire. The pilot gave the order to prepare to abandon ship. The navigator and I put on our chutes and waited at door for order to bail out. About thirty (30) seconds the order came and I opened the door and stepped out of the plane. After my chute opened I looked back and counted four (4) other chutes but then lost sight of plane. A few seconds later I again saw the plane, which had just pulled out of a dive about 200 feet from the water. The number two engine was completely gone and number one was either feathered or stopped. As I watched it the plane climbed to about one thousand (1,000) feet, and then dived straight down into the water. I checked my life vest valves, and tried to unstrap my chute across the chest, but couldn't get it unstrapped. I was working with my leg straps when I hit the water. I released the cylinders on my life vest and worked out of my chute. I was in the water about forty (40) minutes before I was picked up by a boat of an Air-Sea Rescue unit. The coordinates where I last saw the plane hit the water are 42° 05' N. - 16° 00' E. "

WILLIAM N. FERGUSON,
2nd Lt., Air Corps,
Bombardier, 44-6186.

b. " I was flying as Engineer on the missing plane. The first notice I had of anything wrong was when the ball turret man reported over the interphone that the number two engine was leaking gas. We tried to feather the engine, but could not, and so left the formation and headed back toward base. At about the Yugoslavian coast the cylinder temperature dropped to zero. The engine caught fire behind the fire wall in front of the supercharger and then the pilot gave the order to bail out. After I left the plane and my chute had opened I counted nine (9) chutes dropping toward the water. The plane continued toward the shore, then made a steep bank and circled. It then climbed almost straight up before making a final dive into the water. It exploded upon contact with the water. It is my opinion that all but the pilot got out of the plane, as I am sure I saw nine (9) chutes, including my own. I was picked up by an English cavette after about an hour in the water.

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T/Sgt JOHN H. DE HART,
6289672, Engineer, 44-6186.

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Witnesses' Statements to Accompany Missing Air Crew Report on A/C #
44-6186: (Cont'd)

2. " I was flying as ball turret gunner on the missing plane. About ten minutes off the coast I noticed gasoline coming out of the nacelle of the number two engine. The wheel was spinning, throwing the gas over the bottom of the wing. We flew about thirty (30) minutes over Yugoslavia and then turned back. I saw a black puff of smoke come out of the exhaust and then a ball of fire, and it was then that the engine caught fire. I immediately called the pilot and told him the engine was afire, and then came out of my turret. When the order came to bail out I followed the tail gunner. Before I left the plane it was full of smoke. After I hit the water I had to cut myself free of my chute. I was in the water a little more than half an hour when I was picked up by an escort vessel."

Sgt ROBERT M. NOEL,
35809045, Ball Turret.

For the Commanding Officer:

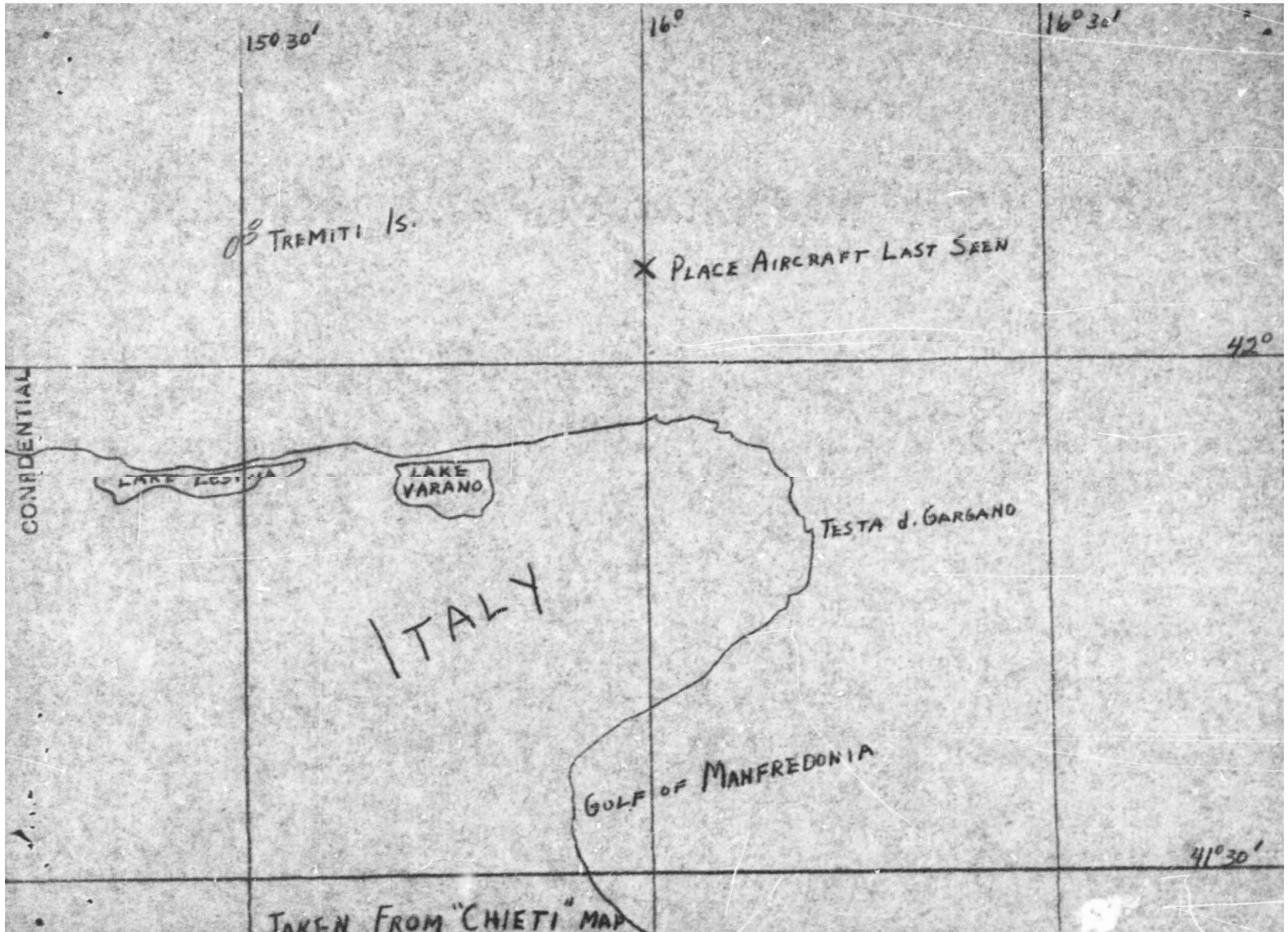
Lawrence D. Snyder
LAWRENCE D. SNYDER,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Operations Officer.

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Mail 10790

19 April 1948

Pentagon Liaison:

Request status & date for crew of ac
44-6186 following crash 2 Dec 1944.

Tillotson, Eugene F. 1st Lt. 0-813610 - KIA 2 Dec 44

Bikkaart, Robert L. 2nd Lt. 0-825²⁷⁰~~721~~ KIA 2 Dec 44

Grant, Stephen H. 1st Lt. 0-2057905 - KIA 2 Dec 44

Ferguson, William N. 2nd Lt. 0-772.154 - Discharged 12-13-44

De Hart, John H. T/Sgt. 6289672 - No Rec. of Cas. ~~No Rec. of Cas.~~

Naglich, John Sgt. 17091484 - KIA 2 Dec 44

Phillips, Milburn C. Sgt. 14163499 KIA 2 Dec 44

Nyers, Frank L. Sgt. 37499802 - KIA 2 Dec 44

Grigg, J. D. Sgt. 38591688 - No Record of Cas. ~~No Rec. of Cas.~~

Noel, Robert M. M/Sgt. 35809045 - Discharged 10-17-45