

August 5, 1992

TO:

Dale Barnes  
Lowell Hasler  
Ted Kusler

Dear Fellows:

I thought you might like to hear some voices from the past. I have agonized over the years on the "what ifs" and the "if onlys". Also what happened in the back of the plane those last few minutes.

Every plane and crew that was lost in the war has an official report, taken from witnesses (last minute) and survivors. By writing to the National Archives and for a fee you can receive an MACR (missing aircraft report). I did this, not that we would learn anything new, but out of curiosity. To me, it raised more questions than it answered.

On the official briefing report there are errors, but it does tell us the name of the 10th crew member. His name was Hendrickson. As you will see later, he was wounded, but did bail out. Also on the report is the fact that the stabilizer and left rudders were shot away, which confirms what I thought I had been told in the POW camp from a prisoner who saw us go down. Of course the biggest error is that nine chutes were seen. You will notice one of the reporting officers is a Captain Kelley. He is one of the few people I remember in the 384th. He was the pilot of one of the lead crews in the 546th squadron. He was probably leading our squadron that day.

Now for the unanswered questions. There is a Casualty Questionnaire filled out by Roleri with his subsequent statement. Also, a single paragraph by Hendrickson. There were questionnaires with Patterson's, Lendoira's, and Lopez's names, but were completely blank.

Roleri's questionnaire along with his and Hendrickson's statements would have to have been taken at Camp Lucky Strike.

My question is why were there questionnaires from the enlisted men and none from the officers. I was never questioned as to what happened. I was real disappointed that Hendrickson did not give some indication as to what happened in the waist. He was wounded and bailed out, but was also the last one to see the other fellows. I cannot understand part of Roleri's statement where he says he was taken to a jail where the pilot, co-pilot, bombardier, assist. radio man, and assist. engineer were. I only remember Dale, Lowell, Roleri and myself being there. I don't remember McGettigan and Hendrickson being there, but then we were all in shock at the time. I remember Roleri being all shot up and kept asking us to loosen his bandages. Maybe Dale's and Lowell's memory is better than mine.

Your evaluation of this information is as good as mine and it does bring back memories. The MACR they send you is all on microfilm so it has to be taken to a machine to be able to read it. There were reports of other crews lost that day, but no report of the other plane the 384th lost that day and was never heard from. The planes

mentioned were from the 303rd Group which was in our wing. One plane just blew up.

While this information may not be revealing, I hope you will find it interesting. I have talked to both Lowell and Ted since the reunion, and all seems to be normal. Nothing new here other than we are in our sixth year of drought. In fact we are out of water now, which is two months early. Betty is fine - just got back from a three week stay in Panama with her two sons and families.

Hope everything is still going fine.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Classification Marked  
Auth: 87843  
Init: 2/22/43  
Date: 14 Oct 43

IMPORTANT: This report will be prepared as a priority matter during the time an aircraft is officially reported missing.

1. ORGANIZATION: Location Station 100; Command or Air Force VIII  
Group 354th; Squadron 540th; Detachment \_\_\_\_\_
2. SPECIFY POINT OF DEPARTURE: Station 100; Course As Briefed  
Intended Destination Worms, Germany; Time of Mission Combat
3. WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF LAST REPORTED POSITION:  
1/10 to 3/10 - Visibility 20 miles.
4. GIVE: (a) Date Oct 13; Time 1235; and Location 54°38' N, 9°40' E  
of last known whereabouts of missing aircraft.  
(b) Specify whether (X) Last Sighted; ( ) Last contacted by Radio;  
( ) Forces Down; ( ) Seen to Crash; or ( ) Information not Available.
5. AIRCRAFT WAS LOST, OR IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN LOST, AS A RESULT OF: (Check only one (X) Enemy Aircraft; ( ) Enemy Anti-aircraft; ( ) Other Circumstances as follows 2 chutes out 54°38'N, 10°05'E. 6 chutes out 54°38'N, 09°40'E. 1 chute as A/C went into spin. Tail gun still firing. 14000 Stabilizer & L. Rudder snow away.
6. AIRCRAFT: Type, Model and Series W-17F; A.A.F. Serial Number 42-29712
7. ENGINES: Type, Model and Series \_\_\_\_\_; A.A.F. Serial Number (a) 42-80750  
(b) 42-77862; (c) 43-56120; (d) 42-80769
8. INSTALLED WEAPONS (Furnish below, Type and Serial Number)  
(a) \_\_\_\_\_; (b) \_\_\_\_\_; (c) \_\_\_\_\_; (d) \_\_\_\_\_  
(e) \_\_\_\_\_; (f) \_\_\_\_\_; (g) \_\_\_\_\_; (h) \_\_\_\_\_
9. THE PERSONS LISTED BELOW WERE REPORTED AS: (a) Battle Casualty X  
or (b) Non-Battle Casualty \_\_\_\_\_
10. NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew 10; Passengers \_\_\_\_\_; Total 10  
(Starting with pilot, furnish the following particulars; if more than 10 persons were aboard aircraft, list similar particulars of separate sheet and attach original to this form.)

	Crew Position	Name in Full (Last Name First)	Rank	Serial Number
EUS.	Pilot	Calnon, Clark Brooks	2nd Lt.	0-663846
EUS.	Co-Pilot	Barnes, Vernon Dale	2nd Lt.	2-879025
EUS.	Navigator	Kusler, Ted Harold	2nd Lt.	0-749390
EUS.	Cowpilot	Hasler, Lowell Clarence	2nd Lt.	1-876219
EUS.	Top Turret	Holleri, John J.	2/Sgt.	31104738
KIA.	Radio operator	Hatterson, Billie Eck	2/Sgt.	1-237217
KIA.	Ball Turret	Loman, Sam (N.I.)	1/Sgt.	18016088
EUS.	Tail Gunner	Landolino, Resasco George	3/Sgt.	12158096
EUS.	Night Flexible Gun	Lahtinen, John Aloysius, Jr.	1/Lt.	33338049
EUS.	Left Flexible Gun	Henrickson, Robert Marshall	1/Sgt.	0912415

11. LIST BELOW THOSE PERSONS WHO ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE LAST KNOWN LOCATIONS OF AIRCRAFT, AND CHECK APPROPRIATE COLUMN TO INDICATE STATUS FOR SAME:

Name in Full (Last Name First)	Rank	Serial Number	Contacted		Check Only One Column	
			By	Last Sighted	Saw	Saw Force
					Crash	Landing
Harry, William Russel, 1st Lt.		0-515826		X		
Kelly, James Henry, Capt.		0-42312		X		
Carpenter, Walter Richard, 2nd Lt.		1-533026		X		

12. IF PERSONNEL ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE SURVIVED, CHECK YES TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS: (a) Parachutes were used \_\_\_\_\_; (b) crews were seen falling away from scene of crash \_\_\_\_\_; or (c) by other reason (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

13. ATTACH AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH, MAP, CHART, OR SKETCH, SHOWING APPROXIMATE LOCATION WHERE AIRCRAFT WAS LAST SEEN.

14. ATTACH EVIDENCE DESCRIPTION OF CRASH, RECOVERED EQUIPMENT, OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES PERTAINING TO MISSING AIRCRAFT. See Par. (5)

15. ATTACH A DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTENT OF DAMAGE, IF ANY, TO GIVE NAME, RANK AND SERIAL NUMBER OF OFFICER IN CHARGE.

Date of Report 11 October 1943

*J. H. Matt*  
Signature of Preparing Officer

J. H. MATT,  
1st Lt., Air Corps,  
1st Lt. Adjutant.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your name John D. Roller Rank 1st Lt Serial No. 31104288
2. Organization 384 Gp Commander Lacey Rank Col Sqn CO Harris Rank Maj  
(full name) (full name)
3. What year 1943 month Oct day 9 did you go down?
4. What was the mission, Attack (ev), target, Airplane Factory, target  
 time, unknown, altitude, 13,000 ft route scheduled, North Sea,  
Denmark, Baltic Sea, route flown As scheduled
5. Where were you when you left formation? unknown
6. Did you bail out? Yes
7. Did other members of crew bail out? unknown All the five members  
bail out
8. Tell all you know about when, where, how each person in your aircraft for whom no individual questionnaire is attached bailed out. A crew list is attached. Please give facts. If you don't know, say: "No Knowledge".  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
9. Where did your aircraft strike the ground? on outskirts of Schleswig Holstein
10. What members of your crew were in the aircraft when it struck the ground? (Should cross check with 8 above and individual questionnaires)  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
No Knowledge.
11. Where were they in aircraft? No Knowledge
12. What was their condition? No Knowledge
13. When, where, and in what condition did you last see any members not already described above? The last time I saw any of the missing men  
was before take off time at the base. I did see Paterson, the radio  
man from the cockpit end of the bombay, while I attempted to release  
the doors to bail out. They were badly shot up and would not release. I motioned to  
Paterson to go out the waist door. He acknowledged my message and entered the  
waist. He had blood on his face and appeared to be wounded badly.
14. Please give any similar information on personnel of any other crew of which you have knowledge. Indicate source of information.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

(Any additional information may be written on the back)

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Classification changed  
 by                       
 Auth: 04803  
 Inits:                       
 Date: 14 Oct 43

**IMPORTANT:** This report will be considered reliable for 48 hours of the time an aircraft is officially reported missing.

1. ORGANIZATION: Location AF Station 106; Command or Air Force VIII  
 Group 384th; Squadron 540th; Detachment
2. SPECIFY POINT of Departure AF Station 106; Course As Briefed  
 Intended Destination Frankfurt, Germany; Type of Mission Combat
3. WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF LAST OBSERVATION:  
1/10 to 3/10 - Visibility 20 miles.
4. GIVE: (a) Date Oct 43 Time 1235; and Location 54°38' N, 9°40' E  
 of last known whereabouts of missing aircraft.  
 (b) Specify whether (X) Last Sighted; ( ) Last contacted by Radio;  
 ( ) Forces Down; ( ) Seen to Crash; or ( ) Information not Available.
5. AIRCRAFT WAS LOST, OR IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN LOST, AS A RESULT OF: (Check only one (X) Enemy Aircraft; ( ) Enemy Anti-Aircraft; ( ) Other Circumstances as follows 2 chutes out 54°38' N 10°05' E. 6 chutes out 54°38' N, 09°40' E. 1 chute as A/C went into spin. Tail gun still firing. 14000 Stabilizer & L. Rudder show away.
6. AIRCRAFT: Type, Model and Series P-17F; A.A.F. Serial Number 42-29712
7. ENGINES: Type, Model and Series                     ; A.A.F. Serial Number (a) 42-80750  
 (b) 42-77862; (c) 43-56120; (d) 42-80769
8. INSTALLED WEAPONS (Furnish below type and Serial Number)  
 (a)                     ; (b)                     ; (c)                     ; (d)                       
 (e)                     ; (f)                     ; (g)                     ; (h)
9. THE PERSONS LISTED BELOW WERE REPORTED AS: (a) Battle Casualty X  
 or (b) Non-Battle Casualty
10. NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew 10; Passengers                     ; Total 10  
 (Starting with pilot, furnish the following particulars; if more than 10 persons were aboard aircraft, list similar particulars on separate sheet and attach original to this form.)

	Crew Position	Name in Full (Last Name First)	Rank	Serial Number
EUS.	Pilot	Galton, Lark Brooks	2nd Lt.	0-663846
EUS.	Co-Pilot	Barnes, Vernon Dale	2nd Lt.	0-679225
EUS.	Navigator	Kusler, Ted Harold	2nd Lt.	0-749390
EUS.	Bombardier	Hasler, Lowell Clarence	2nd Lt.	0-676219
EUS.	Top Turret	Holleri, John D.	T/Sgt.	31104738
KIA.	Radio Operator	Fatterson, Billie Bob	T/Sgt.	38237217
EUS.	Tail Turret	Lopez, Sam (N.I.)	S/Sgt.	18016086
EUS.	Tail Gunner	Leandro, Cesareo Garcia	S/Sgt.	12158096
EUS.	Right Flexible Gun	McFettigan, Johnloysicus, Jr.	Sgt.	33338048
EUSIO.	Left Flexible Gun	Henrickson, Robert Marshall	Sgt.	6912415

11. IDENTIFY BELOW THOSE PERSONS WHO ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE LAST KNOWLEDGE OF AIRCRAFT, AND CHECK APPROPRIATE COLUMNS TO INDICATE BASIS FOR SAME:

Name in Full (Last Name First)	Serial Number	Contacted		Check Only One Column	
		by Radio	Last Sighted	Saw Crash	Saw Force Land
1. Harry, William Russel, 1st Lt., 0-515826			X		
2. Kelly, James Henry, Capt., 0-665313			X		
3. Carpenter, Walter Richard, 2nd Lt., 0-533026			X		

12. IF PERSONNEL ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE SURVIVED, ANSWER YES TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS: (a) Parachutes were used 9; (b) Persons were seen alighting away from scene of crash                     ; or (c) Any other reason (Specify)
13. ATTACH AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH, MAP, CHART, OR SKETCH, SHOWING APPROXIMATE LOCATION WHERE AIRCRAFT WAS LAST SEEN.
14. ATTACH EYEWITNESS DESCRIPTION OF CRASH, FORCED LANDING, OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES PERTAINING TO MISSING AIRCRAFT. See Par. (5)
15. ATTACH A DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTENT OF DAMAGE, IF ANY, AND GIVE NAME, RANK AND SERIAL NUMBER OF OFFICER IN CHARGE

Date of Report 11 October 1943

J. R. Yatt  
 (Signature of Preparing Officer)  
 J. R. YATT,  
 1st Lt., Air Corps,  
 1st Lt. Adjutant.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

## CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your name John D. Roller Rank T/587 Serial No. 31104938
2. Organization 384 Gp Commander Lacey Rank Col. Sqn CO Harris Rank Maj.  
(full name) (full name)
3. What year 1943 month Oct. day 9 did you go down?
4. What was the mission, Anklam (Ger.), target, Airplane Factory, target  
time, unknown, altitude, 13,000 ft. route scheduled, North Sea,  
Denmark, Baltic Sea, route flown As scheduled.
5. Where were you when you left formation? unknown.
6. Did you bail out? Yes.
7. Did other members of crew bail out? unknown All the live members  
bailed out
8. Tell all you know about when, where, how each person in your aircraft for whom no individual questionnaire is attached bailed out. A crew list is attached. Please give facts. If you don't know, say: "No Knowledge".
9. Where did your aircraft strike the ground? on outskirts of Schleswig Holstein.
10. What members of your crew were in the aircraft when it struck the ground? (Should cross check with 8 above and individual questionnaires)
- No Knowledge.
11. Where were they in aircraft? No Knowledge.
12. What was their condition? No Knowledge.
13. When, where, and in what condition did you last see any members not already described above? The last time I saw any of the missing men was before take off time at the base. I did see Paterson, the radio man from the cockpit end of the bombay, while I attempted to release the doors to bail out. They were badly shot up and would not release. I motioned to Paterson to go out the waist door. He acknowledged my message and entered the waist. He had blood on his face and appeared to be wounded badly.
14. Please give any similar information on personnel of any other crew of which you have knowledge. Indicate source of information.

(Any additional information may be written on the back)

1.

When the order to bail out was given, I entered the bombay to release the Bomb Bay doors, which were badly shot up to the extent I could look through them. Patterson stood in the Radio Room leaning into the Bomb Bay and watched while I attempted to get the doors open. His face was covered with blood, and from the way he moved, he must have been bit in the body as well. He was able to stand and walk. When the doors failed to release, I motioned to him to leave through the waist. He understood my motions, acknowledged them, turned and went into the waist. That was the last time I saw him. I entered the cockpit again intending to leave through the <sup>nose</sup> waist hatch, when I thought McBettyan, the asst. Radio Man who had been earlier reported wounded in the head, might be in need of my assistance. I entered the Bombay again, and with my chest chute attached could not squeeze between the Bombay Racks. I was in the process of climbing around them, when the ship made a violent motion, my wounded leg gave away and I fell from the catwalk. My head cleared and I found myself outside in the sunlight. I opened my ~~stee~~ chute and hit the ground to be captured immediately, not having enough time even to unfasten my harness. I was taken to a local jail where I met my pilot, copilot, bombardier, Asst. Radio Men, and Asst Eng. We were kept in the yard until dark and then taken to a hospital at Schleswig Holsten. Most of the patients were Russians. The two other enlisted men and myself were kept here, and the officers were taken away. I remained there for five days and was taken to Dulag Luft. After spending two days in the lock up, I attained a high fever and was removed to Hohmark, a hospital a few miles from the lock up.

2: Here I was locked up in an attic Room and remained there for two weeks, after which time a German Capt. and First Lieut. came to interrogate me. They showed me a roster of my crew and had a cross marked after the names of Patterson, Lopez, and Lendoiro. I asked them the meaning of the crosses, and they explained that the crosses indicated the three men were dead. I asked them how they died, and where the bodies were found, but they said they could tell me nothing. That is the only definite news I have heard about their being a live or dead.



Dear Sir:

I was wounded by machine gun  
and 20 MM in the left arm + left  
leg. In the face and in the eye.

The ship was disabled and I  
was so near unconsciousness I  
went out waist door. If any more  
information desired please let me help  
you.

Robert W. Pennington