

14220

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Classified by ~~SECRET~~

to ~~SECRET~~

by E. A. BRADY, Lt. Col., DC

by F. M. MERRICK, Capt. ~~SECRET~~ 1963

Date

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WAR DEPARTMENT  
HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES

NOTE: This Report will be compiled in triplicate by the Army Air Forces organization within 48 hours of the time an air crew member is officially reported missing.

1. ORGANIZATION: Location, by Name Nuthampstead, England Group 398th Bomb Bv  
Squadron 602nd Bomb Bv Detachment none  
Command or Air Force 8th Air Force
2. SPECIFY: Place of Departure Nuthampstead, England Course \_\_\_\_\_  
Target or Intended Destination Pilsen, Czechoslovakia  
Type of Mission Operational Bombing
3. WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED:  
Ht of aircraft 22000 ft. Temp -28 Deg. Wind 290 Deg 27 knots. Clouds: 7-8/10 M7 base  
12-13000 tops. 15-18000. 1-2/10 hg. cloud est 22-28000. Vis: Unrestricted. No Contrails.
4. GIVE: (a) Day 25 Month April Year 1945; Time Approx 1115 hrs and Location  
4944N-1324E Approx of last known whereabouts of missing aircraft.  
(b) Specify whether aircraft was last sighted (X); Last contacted by radio ( )  
Forced 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) Enemy aircraft ( ); Enemy anti-aircraft (X) Other Circumstances as  
follows: See Remarks.
6. AIRCRAFT: Type, Model and Series B-17G AAF Serial No. 43-38652 ✓
7. NICKNAME OF AIRCRAFT: "Stinker Jr"
8. ENGINES: Type, Model and Series R-1820-97 AF Serial No. (a) 41-42083  
(b) 43-145441 (c) 41-57756 (d) SW-001944
9. INSTALLED WEAPONS, SO CALLED AIRCRAFT MACHINE GUNS as follows:  

Make	Serial Number	Make	Serial Number
(a) <u>Frigidaire</u>	<u>1754713</u>	(g) <u>Frigidaire</u>	<u>1754912</u>
(c) <u>Frigidaire</u>	<u>1754974</u>	(h) <u>Frigidaire</u>	<u>1754911</u>
(e) <u>Frigidaire</u>	<u>1754674</u>	(i) <u>Frigidaire</u>	<u>1755124</u>
(j) <u>Frigidaire</u>	<u>1754766</u>	(k) <u>Frigidaire</u>	<u>1754619</u>
(l) <u>Chapin</u>	<u>1315061</u>	(m) <u>Frigidaire</u>	<u>1754908</u>
(n)		(o)	
10. THE PERSONS LISTED BELOW WERE REPORTED AS: (a) Battle Casualty \_\_\_\_\_  
or Non Battle Casualty \_\_\_\_\_
11. NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew 8 Passengers \_\_\_\_\_ Total 8  
Following information listed for personnel aboard aircraft:  

Crew Position	Name in Full	Rank	Serial Number	Current Status
1. Pilot	<u>Paul A. Coville</u>	<u>2nd Lt</u>	<u>0-779799</u>	<u>RTD</u>
2. C-Pilot	<u>Robert J. McLaughlin, Jr</u>	<u>F/O</u>	<u>T-6032</u>	<u>RTD</u>
3. Navigator	<u>Neil R. Bartimus</u>	<u>2nd Lt</u>	<u>0-2073010</u>	<u>RTD</u>
4. E.T.G.	<u>Vincent J. Ferraro</u>	<u>T/Sgt</u>	<u>32993915</u>	<u>RTD</u>
5. R- Operator	<u>Norman E. Markel</u>	<u>T/Sgt</u>	<u>35891834</u>	<u>RTD</u> <u>WES 0307</u>
6. R.W.G.	<u>Ferry S. Overbaugh Jr</u>	<u>S/Sgt</u>	<u>33490375</u>	<u>RTD</u>
7. B.T.G.	<u>Charles B. Walker</u>	<u>S/Sgt</u>	<u>19220903</u>	<u>KIA</u>
8. T.G.	<u>Charles F. Rawlins</u>	<u>S/Sgt</u>	<u>39542627</u>	<u>RTD</u>
9.				
10. *** Confined in Hospital on Continent.				
11.				

(over)

C O N F I D E N T I A L

13. IDENTIFY BELOW THOSE PERSONS WHO ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE LAST KNOWLEDGE OF AIRCRAFT AND CREW. APPROXIMATE POSITION IS TO BE FURNISHED FOR SAME:

<u>Name in Full</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Serial No.</u>	<u>Contacted by Radio</u>	<u>Last Contacted</u>	<u>Saw Crash</u>	<u>Saw Parachutes</u>
1. Wrobel, Eugene A.	Sgt	36657553		X		
1. Wierdak, Florian F.	Sgt	36720384		X		
2. Stern, Melvin	Sgt	12147548		X		
3. Agnew, Robert R.	2nd Lt	O-784118		X		
4. Skelton, Edward M.	2nd Lt	O-2069496		X		

13. IF PERSONS ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SEVERAL: (a) Parachutes were seen yes; (b) Persons were seen working away from scene of crash \_\_\_\_\_; or (c) any other Reason (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

14. ATTACH AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH, AIR CHART, OR SKETCH, SHOWING APPROXIMATE LOCATION WHERE AIRCRAFT WAS LAST SEEN OR DOWNED.

15. ATTACH EYEWITNESS DESCRIPTION OF CRASH, INCLUDING TIME, OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES PERTAINING TO MISSING AIRCRAFT.

16. GIVE NAME, RANK AND SERIAL NUMBER OF COMMANDER IN CHARGE OF CREW, IF ANY, INCLUDING DESCRIPTION AND RANK.

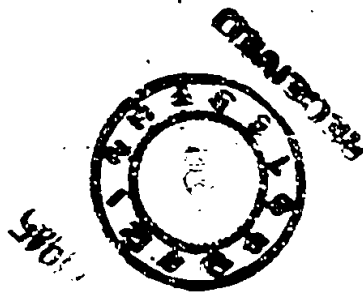
Date of Report 2 May 1945

*Andrew Holb Jr.*

ANDREW HOLB JR  
1st Lt, Air Corps  
Stat Control Officer

17. REMARKS OR COMMENTS ON REPORT:

All members of Crew with exception of S/Sgt Walker (Still Missing) and T/Sgt Norman E. Markel (Confined in Hospital for cut hand on Continent) have returned this base. See Statement of Pilot and Co-Pilot atchd to Int. Summary.



C O N F I D E N T I A L

Lead Squadron "A" Group

	D-7	T-7 ROBINSON Marchbanks E-8553-Y PFF	C-3 Green M-7975-U PFF	D-1 Adams N-8730-R
D-6 Roper N-6821-Y R Monitor D-5 Koenig N-345E-T S.J. (Doran)	Mundhenke N-7874-W Channel #2 D-6 Jauregui N-2596-W	D-10 Starkey N-9224-M C Monitor	D-2 Hernden N-8031-K	D-4 Marchner N-8517-J S.J. (Pliskin) Ret. at E.C. D Monitor

Low Squadron "A" Group

	D-7	Hannauer Reckstrom N-8363-V PFF	B-6 Gieryn A-924E-F	B-3 Dunn A-9310-P
B-2 Keeran A-7982-K	B-3 King A-8086-I S.J. (Dunn) B-1 Lolar A-9146-N S.J. (Brewer)	B-4 Worley A-9293-J	B-3 Williams A-8569-G	B-7 Branyon A-8631-T Ret. at E.C.

High Squadron "A" Group

	B-5	Pryor Thompson A-8214-S PFF	F-9 Coffey E-6885-M	F-6 Wallingford E-8827-Z S.J. (Barabas) F-5 Agnew E-2596-C Ret. at E.C.
F-3 Cady E-8644-N	F-5 Heathcote E-8794-J B Monitor F-8 Zins E-8500-F	F-2 Miller F-8274-B S.J. (Somerville)	F-7 Coville E-8652-V	
F-9 Ferguson E-7256-G				

Low Low Squadron "A" Group

	C-8	Tatchio Nolan M-8716-C PFF	C-6 Shizek M-6896-M	C-7 Peck M-5805-Z S.J. (Bourie) B-8 Bischoff A-7977-E Ret. at E.C.
C-2 Houlzel M-2487-B	C-6 Hill M-7249-F	C-1 Watson M-9180-G S.J. (Gadous)	C-1 Eisele M-8564-X	
C-4 Fultman M-9102-V	C-9 McLean M-8157-W			

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Statement concerning aircraft B-17G 43-38652, Pilot, 2nd Lt Paul A. Coville, O-779799, 602nd Bomb Sq, 398th Bomb Group (Ev) on combat mission to Pilzen, Czechoslovakia, 25 April, 1945.

I was flying in Aircraft B-17G 44-8500, which was the No. four (4) ship in the low element of the high squadron on a combat mission to Pilzen, Czechoslovakia on 25 April 1945. Several minutes after having passed the target I heard someone say on the interphone that "V" for Victor who was flying on our right wing was going down. I swung my turret over and saw the plane with the No. four (4) engine afire leave the formation and drop about five hundred (500) feet under our own airplane. They stayed there for about thirty (30) seconds and then started to go down still under control. After they had dropped what I thought to be about another 2000 feet the wing fell off and they started to spin in. About five (5) or ten (10) seconds later the airplane blew up. Before they started spinning I counted two chutes and two more while they were in a spin. These four I am sure of seeing but I also saw what might have been two more although it was difficult to tell for certain as they were over a white cloud at the time.

*Eugene A. Wrobel*  
EUGENE A. WROBEL, 36657553  
Sgt, 602nd Bomb Squadron  
3TG, B-17G 44-8500.

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**CONFIDENTIAL**

Statement concerning aircraft B-17G 43-38652, Pilot, 2nd Lt Paul A. Coville, O-779799, 602nd Bomb Sq, 398th Bomb Group (HV) on combat mission to Pilzen, Czechoslovakia, 25 April, 1945.

While on a combat mission to Pilzen, Czechoslovakia, on 25 April, 1945, I was flying as Tail Gunner in Aircraft B-17G 44-8644, which was the Number five (5) ship of the high element in the high Squadron.

Two minutes after the bomb run the No. four (4) engine of "V for Victor" ( B-17G 43-38652) had a terrific fire caused from a flak hit in the right wing. The pilot slipped out of the formation and feathered the propeller. The flames seemed to go out but then started again. After that I saw no more due to the ship being directly under our plane. The Ball Turret Gunner then gave a play by play description of " V for Victor" blowing up. The right wing came off and a few seconds later the explosion followed. I saw four (4) chutes from "V for Victor" open and drift to the five (5) o'clock position. We then made a turn and that is all I saw.

*Florian P. Wierdak*

FLORIAN P. WIERDAX, 36720384  
Sgt - 602nd Bomb Squadron  
TG - B-17G 44-8644

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**CONFIDENTIAL**

Statement concerning aircraft B-17G 43-38652, Pilot, 2nd Lt Paul A. Coville, O-779799, 602nd Bomb Sq, 398th Bomb Group (BV) on combat mission to Pilzen, Czechoslovakia, on 25 April, 1945.

I was flying as Tail Gunner in aircraft B-17G 42-102593, which was the number three (3) ship in the low element of the high squadron, while on an operational mission over Pilzen, Czechoslovakia, on 25 April, 1945.

Aircraft "V for Victor" (B-17G 43-38652), after passing the target on the second bomb run, had it's number four (4) engine smoking. The plane kept up in formation for about four (4) or five (5) minutes and then dropped back for a few minutes. The pilot finally brought the aircraft up with the formation and at this time the engine immediately caught fire, burning the right flap completely, before he dropped down. As soon as the engine caught fire I noticed the ball turret gunner whip the turret in to a position where it appeared he could easily get out. I also noticed the tail gunner rip off his oxygen mask and he appeared to be heading toward the nose of the ship. The plane descended rapidly for about two (2) or three (3) thousand feet and then the right wing was torn off from the number four (4) engine back. The plane immediately went into a spin and I soon lost sight of it. I did not see any parachutes.

*Melvin Stern*

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MELVIN STERN, 12147548  
Sgt - 602nd Bomb Squadron  
TG - B-17G 42-102593


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Statement concerning aircraft B-17G 43-38652, Pilot, 2nd Lt Paul A. Coville, C-779799, 602nd Bomb Sq, 398th Bomb Group (Hv) on combat mission to Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, 25 April, 1945.

Flying Aircraft B-17G 42-102595 the No. 3 ship in the low element of the High Squadron, 1st "A" Group, on the mission to Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, on the 25th of April, 1945, I was in a position to observe the following occurrences to the aircraft B-17G 43-38652:

After leaving the target for the second time I noticed gray smoke which appeared to come from the supercharger section of Coville's number four (4) engine. It was not heavy and only slightly noticeable. After a couple of minutes it became somewhat heavier so I broke radio silence to inform Coville of his predicament and received no reply. I drew my plane closer and tried to signal with my hands and my actions. The Co-Pilot looked like he knew what I was talking about. They dropped out of formation about four (4) plane lengths for about three minutes then pulled back up in position. After about three more minutes the smoke became somewhat heavier and about the very instant that the feathering button was pushed the entire inboard wing was ablaze. The blaze immediately carried away the wing flap and part of the underside of the wing. Seeing his wing ablaze I pulled out away from him as he settled back and down away from the formation in level flight. I informed the Squadron Leader of the happenings and told my tail gunner to observe all other actions. He related the entire story to me over the interphone. From the time I first noticed his turbine smoking until he left the formation with his wing ablaze approximately fifteen or more minutes had elapsed.

  
ROBERT E. AGNEW, C-784118  
2nd Lt - 603rd Bomb Squadron  
Pilot - B-17G 42-102595

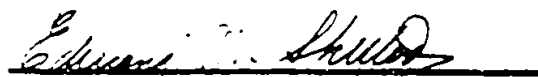
**CONFIDENTIAL**



# CONFIDENTIAL

Statement concerning aircraft B-17G 43-38652, Pilot, 2nd Lt Paul A. Coville, O-779799, 602nd Bomb Sq, 398th Bomb Group (Hv) on combat mission to Pilzen, Czechoslovakia, 25 April, 1945.

Approximately three (3) minutes after leaving the target on the second bomb run, flying in the number five (5) ship of the high element in the high Squadron, I looked through the nose of our plane and saw "V for Victor" (B-17G 43-38652) losing altitude, with the number four (4) engine on fire. Part of the aileron had been shot away and flame was coming from the engine covering the width of the wing. I saw the No. four (4) engine feathered and the plane appeared to be under control. Two members of the crew jumped as the plane lost altitude and I saw the chutes open. The rest of the crew had ample time to leave the plane and I wondered why they didn't. As the plane gradually lost altitude, the fire appeared to go out somewhat and I thought for a moment it had gone out completely - then it blazed up again. It was then that the wing tore off at the engine. The plane started to spin out of control and at this time I saw one more chute open as a crew member left the plane. I would say the plane made at least five (5) or six (6) complete turns, then blew up. When it exploded I saw one crew member blown away off to the right and his chute opened. He was evidently blown out during the explosion.



EDWARD M. SKELTON, O-2069475  
2nd Lt - 602nd Bomb Squadron  
Bombardier - B-17G 44-8644

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

3-2 SUMMARY OF LOSS- INCIDENT ACCOUNT

Instructions: 1. If aircraft returned, only questions 3 and 7 are applicable. 2. Question number 5 not applicable to Fighter Groups. 3. Summary will be prepared in five copies, four of which will be forwarded. 4. Interrogating Officer will sign original and second copy.

GROUP 398th Bomb Gp 602 Bomb Sq / / 43-38652-V MISSION DATE 25 Apr 45

FIRST PILOT Coville, Paul A. 2nd Lt O-779799 DESTINATION Pilsen, Czecho.  
NAME GRADE AND #

1. Position of missing aircraft when last sighted or contacted: Time - 1113 DBST

- (a) By coordinates 4944N-1324E
- (b) Approximate altitude 22,500
- (c) Last known heading Unknown
- (d) If out of formation, approximate distance from formation Unknown

2. Describe enemy opposition (intensity of flak, intensity and method of enemy fighter attack, etc., with particular reference to missing aircraft):

No enemy aircraft. Flak for this aircraft, moderate and accurate.

3. Description of extent of damage to missing aircraft (including fires, explosions, etc):

See attached statement of Pilot and Co-Pilot.

4. If aircraft was out of control describe appearance:

See statement of Pilot and Co-Pilot.

(Over)

C O N F I D E N T I A L



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JOINT ACCOUNT BY PILOT AND CO-PILOT

A/C was hit by flak over the target. Just before that the crew was watching another A/C go down. The Ball Turret Gunner called to the crew that gasoline was streaming out of #4 engine - as they tried to feather #4, the wing section caught fire and a section of the wing was blown off. The crew called and asked if they were to bail out. The Pilot said No - inasmuch as he still had control of the A/C and they would try to make it to friendly lines which weren't far away. Shortly after that the wing buckled and the Pilot gave the order to bail out. The Ball Turret Gunner had harness and parachute on but one leg strap was unfastened, the Radio Operator was helping him fasten it. The A/C exploded the second time and blew the Pilot out. After the Pilot got out the A/C exploded the third time. All men, except the Ball Turret Gunner, are known to have reached the ground and have gotten safely into Allied hands. With exception of Ball Turret Gunner and Radio Operator all have returned to Base; the Radio Operator is in a hospital on the Continent being treated for cut hand, the Ball Turret Gunner is Missing in Action.

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AFPIA-11

INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of crew member: WALKER, Charles B.  
 Rank: S/Sgt.  
 Serial number: 19220903  
 Position: Crew (Bomber) or Pilot (Fighter) Ball Turret Gunner

Did he bail out? No

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, why not? While buckling his harness the plane went into a spin

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: I saw him in the waist of the plane then I bailed out.

Was he injured? Not to my knowledge

Where was he when last seen? In the waist of the plane

Any hearsay information: None

Sources: \_\_\_\_\_

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: I believe he was killed in the plane when it blew up, but there were two other men in the waist with him and they were blown free of the plane. I don't know how I was first at the door and when the wing broke off I jumped. That's all I know.

Total number of missions of above crew member: 18

Dates and destinations if possible: 1. NURNBERG 2. SCHWERTE  
3. NECKERSULM 4. CHEMITZ 5. DILLENBERG 6. OSNABRUCK 7. ORANIENBURG  
8. BERLIN 9. RHEINE 10. DORSJENT 11. OSNABRUCK 12. BREMEN 13. HALLE  
14. GREENWOLD 15. ORANIENBURG 16. DRESDEN 17. ROSENHEIM 18. PILSEN

6-3062-1E X

All the missions were over Germany except Pilsen  
CZECH

INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of crew member: **WALTER, Charles B.**  
 Rank: **S/Sgt.**  
 Serial number: **19220903**  
 Position: Crew (Pomper) ~~Ball Turret Gunner~~ **Ball Turret Gunner**

Did he bail out? NO

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, why not? PLANE WENT IN SPIN

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: SEEN PUTTING ON HARNESS AND CHUTE

Was he injured? NO

Where was he last seen? NEAR TURRET PUTTING ON GEAR

Any hearsay information: COULDN'T BAIL OUT CAUSE HE WAS BEHIND ME AS WING BLEW OFF + PLANE WENT IN SPIN. I, BALL GUNNER + RADIO MAN WERE IN WAIST WHEN TRAGEDY OCCURRED

Source: FUEL TANK BLEW UP

Are explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: NO DOUBT HE WAS BLOWN OUT OF

SPINNING PLANE AS I + THE OTHER MEMBER WERE THROWN CLEAR. WE WERE TOLD IN ENGLAND HE WAS KILLED. I FIGURE HIS CHUTE MUST HAVE FAILED TO OPEN.

Total number of missions or abs. crew member. 18

Date and destination if possible: FEB - NURENBERG, FEB 28 - Schwerte

MAR 1 - Neckersulm, MAR 5 - Chemnitz, MAR 12 - Dillenburg, MAR 14 - OSNABRUCK

MAR 15 - ORANIEBURG, MAR 18 - Berlin, MAR 21 - Rhone, MAR 22 - Dorsten, MAR 24 - "

MAR 30 - Bremen, MAR 31 - Halle, APR 5 - Grafenwoh, APR 15 - Oranienburg, APR 16 - Dresden

APR 17 - Rosenheim, APR 25 - Pilsen (shot Down) 6-3861-AF

INDIVIDUAL CISM Questionnaire

Name of crew member: WALKER, Charles B.  
 Rank: S/Sgt.  
 Serial number: 19220903  
 Position: Crew (Pomper) ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Ball Turret Gunner B-17-G

Did he bail out? NO

Where? HE DID NOT BAIL OUT

If not, why not? ANSWER ON OTHER SIDE.

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: HELP ME!

Was he injured? NO

Where was he when last seen? FIVE FEET FROM WAIST DOOR

Any hearsay information: NO.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Source: \_\_\_\_\_

Any explanation of his fate and in part or wholly on supposition: \_\_\_\_\_

NO

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of missions of above crew member: 18

Dates and destinations if possible: NURNBURG - FEB. 20, 1945 - SCHWERTE 28<sup>th</sup>

NECKERSLUM - MAR. 1<sup>st</sup> - CHEMNITZ - MAR. 4<sup>th</sup> - DILLENBURG - 12<sup>th</sup> OSNABRUCK 14<sup>th</sup>

ORIENTBURG - 15<sup>th</sup> BERLIN - 18<sup>th</sup> - RHEINE - 21<sup>st</sup> DORSTEN - 22<sup>nd</sup> - ACHMER - 24<sup>th</sup> BREMEN - 30<sup>th</sup>

HALLE - 31<sup>st</sup> - GRAFENWOHR - APRIL 5<sup>th</sup> - ORANIENBURG - 10<sup>th</sup>

DRESDEN - APRIL 17<sup>th</sup> - ROSENHEIM - 18<sup>th</sup> PILZEN - APRIL 25<sup>th</sup>

6-3861-AF

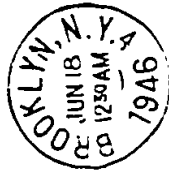
(OVER)

After we were hit with flak over the target the gas tank in the right wing exploded. The navigator was toggling that day and he bailed out. I left my radio room to bail out and Walker had gotten out of his ball turret and was about five feet from the door. He did not have his leg straps fastened and he did have the chest buckle fastened with the chute in proper place. He yelled at me to help him. I got one strap fastened and was just about finished with the other when the wing broke off between 3 and 4 engine's. By then the co-pilot bailed out, the waist-gunner, tail gunner also. The pilot had started to leave. (as he told me later) the engineer, Walker, and myself were still in the ship. Then after the wing broke off, it started in a spin and I couldn't even lift my hand or head from the floor. Then I blacked out and the next thing I remember I heard an enormous explosion and I was blown into the air. I was unconscious again and I came to in the air. My chute was still untouched, my boots had been blown off. I was just in the air about a minute, so I fell about 18,000 feet before I came to. We were at 22,000 feet when it started. I was wounded and received the Purple Heart.

I was the last man to see Walker alive. He must have been killed by the E.G. explosion, or knocked unconscious like myself, and he wasn't fortunate enough to wake-up in time to pull his chute. BY-T/SGT NORMAN E. MARKEL 35891934

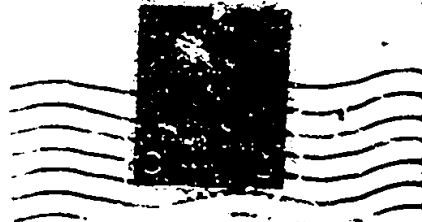


Mr. T. Barrows  
1229 Berkeley St.  
Brooklyn, N. Y.



Commanding General  
Army Air Forces  
A.F.P.F.A.-8  
Washington 25, D. C.

Harry Overbaugh  
175 Green St.  
 Sellersville Pa.



To: Commanding General  
Army Air Forces.

Attention: AFPPA-8.

Washington 25<sup>(2)</sup>  
D.C.