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Classification changed
to **RESTRICTED**
by E. A. BRADONAH, Lt. Col., AD
/ F. M. MURDOCH, Capt., AD
Date **1 MAR 1981**

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Report NO. 2

Original - ~~Supplemental~~

61st Bomb Sq, 39th Bomb Gp
(77nd)

~~MISSING AIR CRAFT REPORT~~ (Cross out one)

to ~~RESTRICTED~~
by S. A. SHANNON, Lt. Col., AF
by F. M. [unclear], Capt., AF

- ORGANIZATION: Location, by Name AFPO 246, Command or Air Force XII Bomber Command
Group 39th Squadron 61st Detachment
- SPECIFF: Place of Departure North Fld; Course 343°, 351°, 301°, 357°, 036°, 090°
Target or Intended Destination Nagoya 155°, 166°, 163°
- WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED:
5/10 to 6/10 cloud coverage with bases 1000 and tops estimated 8000. Vis over 10 mi
- DATE: (a) Day 15 Month May Year 1945 Time 1800K, and location of last known whereabouts of missing aircraft, 11°36'N 144°16'E
(b) Specify, whether aircraft was last sighted (); last contacted by radio (); forced down (x); seen to crash (); or information not available ().
- AIRCRAFT WAS LOST, OR IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN LOST, AS A RESULT OF: (Check only one) Enemy Aircraft (); Enemy Anti-Aircraft (); Other circumstances as follows: Failure of #1 and #2 engines.

- AIRCRAFT: Type, Model and Series B-29, AAF Serial No. 44-69773
- NICKNAME OF AIRCRAFT, if any: None
- ENGINES: Type, Model and Series Not applicable AAF Serial Nos Aircraft ditched
(a) at sea. (b) (c) (d)
- INSTALLED WEAPONS (Furnish below Make, Type and Serial Number):
Make: Same as #8, Type:
(a) (b) (c) (d)
(e) (f) (g) (h)
(i) (j) (k) (l)
(m) (n) (o) (p)
- THE PERSONS LISTED BELOW WERE REPORTED AS: (a) Battle Casualty X
or (b) Non-Battle Casualty
- NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew 11; Passengers 1; Total 12
(Starting with Pilot, furnish the following particulars:

Crew Position	Name in Full (Last Name First)	Rank	Serial Number	Current Status
1. A	Senger, William J.	Capt	0-886125	Present
2. A	Kowalke, Garvin R.	1st Lt	0-752419	Present
3. B	Bates, Edward L. Jr	1st Lt	0-2064193	Present
4. C	Bucher, George F.	1st Lt	0-728451	Present
5. L	Kolbert, Howard	1st Lt	0-865220	Missing in Action ✓
6. N	Howard, Melvin J.	Sgt	39293587	Present
7. G	Conley, Marvin N. Jr	S/Sgt	39559162	Present
8. O	Stanton, Mervin L.	S/Sgt	19145957	Missing in Action ✓
9. Y	Harris, Brooks M.	Sgt	36842096	Present
10. K	Harrison, Robert P. Jr	Sgt	13075982	Present
11. K	Durrance, Victor B.	Sgt	14189150	Present
12. A	*Kobler, Cornelius W.	Capt	0-666191	Present
13.	* Capt Kobler was passenger aboard plane as complying with XII Bomber Command Reg 50-11 dtd 25 Feb 45.			

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

Check only one column

Name in Full (Last Name First)	Rank	ASN	Contacted Last by Radio	Saw Sighted	Saw Force Landing
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- All individuals with the exception of the two listed as missing in action shown in item #11
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28 MAR 1945

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HEADQUARTERS
314TH BOMBARDMENT WING
APO #246, Unit 2, c/o PM
San Francisco, Calif

R-626
Hofelder

29 May 1945

Air Sea Rescue Report No. 6 (Supplement to AAF Form 16, dated 18 May 1945).

1. Wing 314th Group 39th Squadron 61st Aircraft B-29 44-69773
2. Mission No. 18 (Nagoya), dated 15 May 1945.
3. Cause of Ditching: Primary cause - #1 and #2 engines were feathered with bomb-bay doors stuck open causing excessive drag. Secondary cause - Airplane Commander was unable to trim aircraft which was losing altitude rapidly.
4. Time, location: 1800K, 14°37'N, 144°22'E.
5. Crew:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Last Seen</u>
1. P	W J Senger	Captain	Rescued
2. CP	G R Kowalke	1st Lt	Rescued
3. N	E L Bates	1st Lt	Rescued
4. B	G F Bucher	1st Lt	Rescued
5. RO	M N Conley	Sgt	Rescued
6. FE	E J Howard	Sgt	Rescued
7. RG	B M Harris	Sgt	Rescued
8. LG	R P Harrison	Sgt	Rescued
9. TG	V D Durrane	Sgt	Rescued
10. CFC	M L Stanton	S/Sgt	Missing
11. Radar Opr	N Kelbert	1st Lt	Missing
12. PASSENGER	C W Kobler	Captain	Rescued

6. Narrative Report.

a. Prior to Ditching.

Crew #21 was returning home from target on 15 May and upon leaving target area No. 1 engine was feathered due to a runaway propeller. At 1800K, (ETA at Base 1840K) No. 2 engine started to backfire, at which time the airplane commander feathered No. 2 engine. The airplane Commander ordered the engineer to transfer the gas from No. 2 to No. 3 and No. 4 engines. In so doing a total of between 400 to 600 gallons of gasoline remained. At this time the airplane commander warned crew of emergency situation.

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- 13. IF PERSONNEL ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE SURVIVED, ANSWER YES TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS: (a) Parachutes were used _____; (b) Persons were seen walking away from scene of crash _____; (c) Any other reason (Specify) Plane was ditched and survivors were able to get clear of aircraft.
- 14. ATTACH AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH, MAP, CHART, OR SKETCH, SHOWING APPROXIMATE LOCATION WHERE AIRCRAFT WAS LAST SEEN OR HEARD FROM:
- 15. ATTACH EYEWITNESS DESCRIPTION OF CRASH, FORCED LANDING, Q. OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES PERTAINING TO MISSING AIRCRAFT.
- 16. GIVE NAME, RANK AND SERIAL NUMBER OF OFFICER IN CHARGE OF SEARCH, IF ANY. INCLUDING DESCRIPTION AND EXTENT: 1st Lt Graham S. Campbell, O-724288 in charge of search by Air Sea Rescue Unit 311th Bomb Wing. Search conducted in accordance with provisions of XXI Bomber Command Regulations. Survivors picked up by Naval vessel DE "Doherty".

DATE OF REPORT 17 May 1945

George W. Mundy
(Signature of Preparing Officer)

GEORGE W. MUNDY,
Colonel, Air Corps,
Commanding.

17. REMARKS OR EYEWITNESS STATEMENTS:

Plane forced to ditch by failure of #1 engine and the subsequent failure of #2 engine. All excess weight jettisoned and bomb bay tanks salvoed. Power was inadequate to close bomb bay doors, and as a consequence plane lost altitude due to the "drag". This necessitated ditching. Both men reported missing in action were seen to leave the plane which floated until it was sunk by gunfire from the DE "Doherty". Many of the survivors were unable to swim toward raft and had to be helped. Lt Kolbert was heard to cry for help, but when survivors looked for him, he was nowhere to be found. S/Sgt Stanton was not seen except as he left the plane. Most of the survivors were picked up suffering from exposure and seasickness, bruises, etc.

Note: On Supplemental reports, it is not necessary to repeat answers to questions previously answered, except questions 1 and 2. Additional statements may be attached here.

XI BC Casualty Form #3.

25 May 1945
15100

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b. Preparation for Ditching:

The airplane commander ordered the crew members to fire the ammunition and throw out all loose equipment, thereafter the order to prepare for ditching was given. He also ordered the bomb bay tank be dropped to decrease weight. After this had been accomplished the bomb bay door stuck open causing excessive drag and rapid loss of altitude. The radio operator used emergency frequencies 7415 and 4475 alternately and all other emergency communication was carried out. The aircraft flew for ten minutes with the bomb bay doors open before ditching.

c. Ditching Positions:

Normal ditching positions as prescribed in XXI Bomber Command Air Sea Rescue Bulletin were assumed by all except navigator who was standing against front top turret, right gunner who was standing in radar room, and radar operator who was seated in radar room.

d. Ditching:

The ditching took place approximately 65 miles north of Guam at 1800K on a heading of 168° T and a speed of 100 MPH. Visibility was clear and wind velocity was 20 MPH. The height of swells was from 10 to 12 feet. Landing was accomplished with #1 and #2 feathered and using no available power on #3 and #4 engines, flaps up, bomb bay doors open and A/C in a level altitude, flying into the wind and landing across the waves. The aircraft struck the water with a mild impact. On impact, nose broke and aircraft was flooded with water; also the tail section broke at rear pressure bulkhead.

e. Escape :

Airplane commander and pilot escaped through their respective windows; flight engineer, navigator, bombardier, and radio operator through flight engineer's escape hatch; CFC, right gunner and radar operator through break in plane; left gunner through rear escape hatch; tail gunner through tail hatch.

f. Survival:

The airplane commander and bombardier released the large E-A life rafts from the outside of the aircraft. When the airplane commander noticed some of the crew members drifting away, he left the raft with two of the crew members aboard with instructions to pick up the rest. He then started to swim out after the crew members who were floating away. The first person the airplane commander sighted was the co-pilot who was in a type C₂ one man raft. The airplane commander then found a one man raft which the co-pilot inflated for him. After securing the two rafts together they started after another member of the crew who was about 300 yds away. Struggling against the high waves for 20 minutes they were

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finally able to reach him and placed him between the two rafts. They drifted near the ditched aircraft until about 0200K at which time they thought they would try and contact the rest of the crew. They found the other crew members about 300 yds away in one large raft with the navigator in charge. One large raft was not inflated due to a hole. They tied the rafts together and spent the balance of the night around the vicinity of the ditched aircraft. At dawn they repaired the large raft and checked all of the equipment and rafts.

g. Rescue:

At about 0700K next day survivors sighted B-29's at which they flashed their signal mirrors. The B-29's sighted and dropped smoke bombs to mark the survivors. At 1100K they sighted two PBV's at which they also flashed their signal mirrors. The survivors used sea markers and signal flares. Later the PBV's dropped a message to the survivors stating that they would be rescued by a Navy boat in two hours. At about 1310K they sighted smoke in the distance. It was a Navy destroyer at which they flashed their mirrors. The destroyer replied with a green lamp and the survivors were picked up at 1340K, arriving in port at 1930K.

h. Crew Comments and Recommendations:

(1) Astrodome would not jettison after sealing strip had been torn away from around it. All attempts to loosen the astrodome failed. Recommend that release mechanism on astrodome be modified so that release of same can be easily accomplished.

(2) Putt-putt in unpressurized section broke loose and injured crew member who was sitting in proper ditching position. Recommend that putt-putt be anchored more firmly or that ditching position of personnel in that section be changed.

(3) Jettisoning of loose equipment to lighten aircraft is not necessary. A few hundred pounds less weight will not affect the flying characteristics of a distressed B-29. This does not mean that small light articles which might injure crew in ditching should not be jettisoned.

(4) Radio operator used emergency frequencies 7415 and 4475 alternately. By switching from one frequency to another so often, radio operator exposed himself to the danger of losing contact on one frequency while trying to contact the other. It is not necessary to give distance, code word, and bearing south of Iwo Jima. Recommend that radio operator be instructed to stay on one frequency and not change from one to another.

(5) Recommend that life raft release, be installed on flight engineer's panel.

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(6) Recommend two 50 foot lengths of rope, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch be placed in life raft accessory kits for the purpose of hauling men to raft in a rough sea.

(7) Type C-1 sustenance vests became very heavy in the water. Heavy GI shoes had a tendency to drag them under and hampered their movements while in the water. Recommend that C-1 sustenance kits not be worn on the person at time of ditching, and shoes be taken off at time of assuming ditching position in aircraft.

(8) Recommend that a zipper opening be installed on life raft accessory kit to enable easy access. Also there is less danger of losing equipment during opening and closing of kit.

(9) Bulkhead pressure door braces tore loose from the pressure of water entering bomb bay. Recommend that braces be strengthened to withstand increased pressure in case of emergency.

BY COMMAND OF BRIGADIER GENERAL POWEN:

Floyd Cooley
FLOYD COOLEY
Lt Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

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CPMRC 704/2641

1st Ind.

HEADQUARTERS, CENTRAL PACIFIC BASE COMMAND, APO 956, 31 May 1945.

To: Commanding General, Army Air Forces, Washington, D.C.
(Attention: Statistical Control Division)



PAUL E. BAKER,
1st Lt., AGD,
Asst Adjutant General

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