

CONFIDENTIAL 29 November 1944

STATEMENT OF CPL. HENRI GARNER, 60TH BOMB SQDN, TAIL GUNNER.

I was supposed to be in the tail but I went up in the nose to help the Engineer. We figured that way whatever I could learn would help. I was up front. The take-off seemed to be all right, nothing seemed to be wrong. Then we got about to the clouds, a few seconds afterwards, No. 3 engine started to backfire, I thought about every five seconds. We were a couple of hundred feet above the clouds. Our altitude was exactly 4700 feet because I asked the Engineer what his altitude and air speed was. We went on for a few minutes and Capt. Miller seemed to be a little cranky, I don't know for what reason. They were talking back and forth and then I heard him say to Lt. Phillips "Get that damn earphone off so you can hear him." Lt. Phillips took it off then. The Engineer told Capt. Miller the No. 3 engine was dead and they should feather it. Capt. Miller said they didn't want to feather unless they had to. I could hear them but not too plainly, I would miss some of the words. I would say that went on for a couple of minutes. Afterwards the Engineer called Captain and said "We have to feather No. 3." so Captain Miller said "All right." Captain Miller reached down and pressed the button. I looked out the window to see if the engine really feathered. It feathered perfectly and the ship flew well. Called the tower and got the conditions below so we could come in. I heard him say "We have No. 3 engine out; one, two, three, that is all." Not being on interphone I couldn't hear everything that was said. It seemed to me all of a sudden all three engines just cut off. I mean they just didn't make any noise. I couldn't hear a single engine. I looked to see if they were still turning and they were. The left gunner called the Engineer and told him No. 2 was on fire. I have been thinking about it a lot. It seemed to me that before the Engineer knew No. 2 was on fire, he checked his panel. Captain Miller called the Tower and said No. 3 engine out and two engines going out. I thought two engines were dead. Talking afterwards, I imagine he meant No. 2 engine. From the noise of the motor that is the way it seemed. Captain Miller got very excited. He asked the Tower what the conditions were. He stopped all of a sudden then and he said something to the Engineer. He said "Shoppe, you and I are going to" - I didn't hear the last of it. I thought they were going to do something together, I don't know what, of course. He said "The other boys will bail out." I was sitting in the hatch. I just lifted it and I yelled that the wheel was up. I think the Engineer yelled to Captain Miller to put the wheel down. Capt. Miller was not in his seat, he was standing over there and Lt. Phillips was in his chair as if he was frozen there, with his hand on his knee, looking forward. He didn't have his hands or his feet on anything. I said "What the hell, this is a crazy time to be flying like this." I looked to see if Lt. Phillips had his feet on the pedals and Capt. Miller was standing there and I believe he raised his hand up to signal us to get out. I had this on my conscience: how to use parachutes. Good idea to give more instruction on how to use them. I went out of that ship with my parachute upside down; could have been killed. It is my fault, I grant you. I remember thinking "This is a hell of a way to leave a ship". It wouldn't be a bad idea to tell them to take care of their chutes. Anyway, I think the Bombardier asked Captain Miller if we were going to bail out. I was a little baffled by that time. I asked him two or three times and he didn't say anything.

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Statement of Cpl Garner (cont'd)

I don't know if Capt. Barthel said anything. I think they looked at each other. The Navigator says "Well, this is it" and went out. The Bombardier says "Come on, come on, you're next." I couldn't get my strap on and I was all nervous. I went to jump; I sat on the side. I think the Engineer shoved me out.

Q: You went down with one leg strap?

A: One leg strap. My back kind of hurts a little. It is my fault, I grant you, I have seen other boys do the very same thing. I believe I blacked out as I just remember starting out. I imagine why the boys in the rear didn't get out is because their chutes were on the bunks. If the alarm bell was ringing, sir, I never heard it. Captain Miller did not order the crew to bail out. Sgt. Shoppe, the Engineer, really stayed on his job. When I showed up he was very surprised. He told the crew (I believe he called Fries, the left gunner) to get the boys and get the hell of the plane, get out. That came from the Engineer.

Q: Lt. Charles was in the back end?

A: I never saw Lt. Charles or the Radio Operator. I saw this boy here, the radio man; when I was going down he was yelling "I'm stuck, I'm stuck." As far as I know, Lt. Phillips was still in his seat. Captain Miller was running around, nobody touching the controls. If the ship was on automatic pilot nobody touched it. Just before they feathered No. 3, Phillips was fooling around with this box and Miller shoved his hand away; both fooling around with it, engines out off. To me it seems all four engines shut off. Captain asked the Engineer what he was doing and the Engineer said "Doing everything possible, everything I can, sir." I think the Engineer did a great job. I believe he pushed me out and then I believe he pushed the other fellow out.

/s/ Henri Garner
HENRI GARNER
Cpl., 60th Bomb Sq.
Tail Gunner.

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

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