

**WAR DEPARTMENT  
HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES  
WASHINGTON**

**The MISSING AIR CREW REPORT**

**4086**

IMPORTANT: This report will be compiled in triplicate by each Army Air Forces organization within 48 hours of the time an aircraft is officially reported missing.

1. ORGANIZATION: Location Torretta, Italy Command or Air Force 15<sup>th</sup> AF  
Group 461<sup>st</sup> Bomb Gp (H) Squadron 767<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq (H)

2. SPECIFY: Place of departure Torretta, Italy Course NE  
Target Bihac, Yugoslavia Type of mission Combat

3. WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED:  
CAVU

4. GIVE: [a] Date 2 Apr 44 Time 1145 Last known position Bihac, Yugoslavia  
[b] Specify whether: [] Last sighted, [] Forced down, [] 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, [] Other **Aircraft collided with another from 766<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, broke in two and crashed.**

6. AIRCRAFT: Type, model & series B-24 H AAF Serial Number 42-52388

7. NICKNAME OF AIRCRAFT: \_\_\_\_\_

8. ENGINES: Type, model & series R 1830-43 AAF serial Number [a] BP 400682  
[b] BP 400619 [c] BP 400618 [d] BP 400606

9. INSTALLED WEAPONS: [Make, type and serial number] **All Browning Cal. 50**

[a] <b>952014</b>	[e] <b>681330</b>	[i] <b>951926</b>
[b] <b>951951</b>	[f] <b>676014</b>	[j] <b>951801</b>
[c] <b>681933</b>	[g] <b>1153229</b>	
[d] <b>1153174</b>	[h] <b>1152662</b>	

10. PERSONNEL LISTED BELOW REPORTED AS: [] 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 POSITION	FULL NAME [Last, First, Initial] RANK, SERIAL NUMBER	CURRENT STATUS	NEXT OF KIN, RELATIONSHIP AND ADDRESS
[1] Pilot	<b>Zumsteg, William Henry, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. 0-417556</b>		
[2] CP	<b>Fuller, John Coltrane, Jr., 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. 0-742243</b>		
[3] Bomb	<b>Felber, George Martin, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. 0-688519</b>		
[4] Nav	<b>Repko, Joseph John, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. 0-810947</b>		
[5] TTG	<b>Ives, Oscar R., M/Sgt. 19076326</b>		
[6] LWG	<b>Kadlecek, Alvin Joseph, S/Sgt. 38239579</b>		
[7] NTG	<b>Clayton, Woodrow Peachman, S/Sgt. 18186963</b>		
[8] TTG	<b>Lerna, Antonio (NMI) Jr., S/Sgt. 18200156</b>		
[9] RWG	<b>Allece, Andrew Joseph, S/Sgt. 12168185</b>		
[10] BTG	<b>Earl, Richard (NMI), Sgt. 32743712</b>		
[11]			

[12]

12. IDENTIFY BELOW THOSE PERSONS WHO ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE LAST KNOWLEDGE OF AIRCRAFT AND CHECK APPROPRAITE [one only] COLUMN TO INDICATE BASIS FOR SAME:

NAME IN FULL	RANK	SERIAL No.	CONTACTED BY RADIO	LAST SIGHTED	SAW CRASH	SAW FORCED LANDING
[1] <b>Streeper, Owen Burns</b>	<b>Sgt.</b>	<b>36476161</b>		<b>X</b>		
[2] <b>Helms, Jeffrey Coy</b>	<b>S/Sgt.</b>	<b>18057400</b>		<b>X</b>		
[3] <b>Laughlin, Robert Dennis</b>	<b>Sgt.</b>	<b>19123848</b>		<b>X</b>		

[4]

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

Parachutes were used,  Persons were seen walking away from the scene of the crash,

Other reasons [specify].

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: **No search.**

Date: 6 Apr 44

/s/ Raymond L. Wilcovitz

767TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)  
461ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP  
APO 520 US ARMY

STATEMENT

I was flying in ship 670, No. 2 position in B flight, in the tail turret, when the accident came to my attention. The two planes were interlocked, and turning over and over. Then as I remember the ship with the red cowling broke in two, at or near the waist windows. They then separated with the ship that was broken in two going end over end and the other in a steep dive. This ship then leveled off at about 10,000 feet, and was heading back towards the target. Out of this ship I saw four (4) men bail out and four chutes open. I checked several times. When the ship was last seen by me it was still in level flight and going 180 degrees from us, and a bit north of the town.

/s/ Jeffery C. Helms  
S/Sgt., 767<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq.

Note: Lt. Zumsteg's ship, #388, 767<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq, had red cowlings.

I was in the tail of plane #252399 flown by Lt. Aldredge, that was ahead of the two planes that crashed. I was looking at the target to see what the bombs had done. As I looked around again, I saw planes #388 and #9336 just come together. They were headed to my left and in a bank, and noses pointed up, with their bellies turned toward me. There was one ship against the bottom of the other. Both planes made a flat spin about one and one half turns, locked together. Then the two planes rolled over a little and one plane broke in half between the ball turret and the waist window and then fell one on each side of the plane. The tail went down end over end, and a man fell out the window; some other things also came out that looked like bags. The front of the plane went down in a spin. I watched it till it went out of sight under our plane. Then I watched the other plane till it went out of sight. It was going down right side up, and headed for some timber. There was something coming off the plane; one was very large. The other things could have been crew members or parts of the plane. I didn't see any parachutes. The plane went out of sight in the timber, and I couldn't see it crash. I didn't see any smoke or signs of fire. I also couldn't tell which plane broke in half. There was a lot of white smoke coming from all four motors of the plane headed for the timber.

Although I do not know whether it was Lt. Zumsteg's or Lt. Wilson's plane that broke in two, I am sure it was the ship that was on the bottom; the one that had it's belly towards me as they banked, noses pointed up. I do not believe anyone could have gotten out of the ship that broke in two, but it would have been possible to escape from the other one.

/s/ Owen B. Streeper  
Sgt., 767<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq., 461<sup>st</sup> Bomb Gp

I was standing in the bomb bay; the doors were open. Lt. Zumsteg's ship was first noted coming under Lt. Aldredge's ship and at the time the leading edge of the left wing was noted to have paint scars in a jagged shape. This was noted because of the difference in wings. About 5 or 6 seconds later the tail gunner called that the two ships had collided. A few seconds later, what seemed to be a complete ship but possibly was the front half of the broken ship was observed spiraling down to the ground. It crashed on what was apparently a wooded hillside, not covered by snow. A puff of gray dust or smoke was seen after the plane crashed. Then vision was cut off.

/s/ James M. Boyd  
M/Sgt. 767<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq., 461<sup>st</sup> Bomb Gp

Our ship was flying No. 2 position, Lt. Zumsteg was flying No. 4 position, and Lt. Wilson was flying No. 5 position. Just before we reached the target, Lt. Zumsteg pulled out of No. 4 position to his left. I did not see where he went. The next time I looked, Lt. Wilson was in No. 4 position. After we left the target, approximately 3 (three) minutes later, Lt. Wilson pulled to the right as if he lost position for a moment. During this time, Lt. Zumsteg was pulling back in No 4 position, below and ahead of Lt. Wilson. At the same time Lt. Wilson was pulling back into No 4 position over and behind Lt. Zumsteg. As they were coming together Lt. Wilson's ship; that is, the number 1 and 2 engines of his ship; went between the vertical stabilizers of Lt. Zumsteg's ship. They were so close together, one over the other, that I could see the shadow of Lt. Wilson's ship on Lt. Zumsteg's ship. During this time I was waving to Lt. Wilson, who I know was looking at me. Lt. Wilson's ship landed on top of Lt. Zumsteg's ship. Lt. Wilson's No 1 and 2 engines were cutting the fuselage of Lt. Zumsteg's ship down as deep as the top of the waist window. Lt. Wilson landed on top and just behind the vertical scance antenna on Lt. Zumsteg's ship. I then saw them peel off to the right and behind our ship. That is all I know.

/s/ Robert D. Laughlin  
Sgt., 766<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq., 461<sup>st</sup> Bomb Gp

767<sup>TH</sup> BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON  
461<sup>ST</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF

APO #520, c/o PM  
New York, New York  
**6 April 1944**

AG 360.33

SUBJECT: Missing Air Crew Report.

TO: Commanding Officer, 461<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group,  
APO #520, c/o PM, New York, New York.

1. In compliance with Letter, 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force, file AG 360.33 dtd. 5 January 1944, subject: Preparation of Missing Air Crew Reports, submitted herewith is Missing Air Crew Report for B-24 **42-52388, Lt. William H. Zumsteg** and crew.
2. Subject crew personnel are battle casualties as defined by Paragraph 2, Section II, Circular No. 10, Headquarters, NATOUSA.
3. Battle Casualty Report forwarded your headquarters **5 April 1944**.

For the Squadron Commander:

/s/ Raymond L. Wilcovitz  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt., AC,  
Adjutant

1<sup>st</sup> Ind. LCP/rfq  
Headquarters, 461<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group, APO 520, U.S. Army, 19 April 1944.

TO: CO, 49<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing, APO 520, U.S. Army.

Forwarded.

For the Group Commander:

/s/ Louis C. Pfister,  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt., Air Corps  
Personnel Officer

AG 360.33

2<sup>nd</sup> Ind.

GP-m/gow

HQ. FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE, APO 520, 22 April 1944.

TO: CG. NATOUSA, APO 534. Attn: Casualty Branch, AGD.

1. Personnel included in attached MAC Report were processed on consolidated BCR No. I-57, dated 20 April 1944, which was forwarded to the 30<sup>th</sup> MRU 20 April 1944.

For the Commanding General:

/s/ Harold B. Neely,  
Major, AGD,  
Assistant AG.

**CASUALTY REPORT FOR AGO**

Prepared by  
MIS-X Section  
POW Branch

DATE: **31 May 44**

NARRATOR:	<b>M/Sgt. Oscar R. Ives</b>	SQUADRON:	<b>767<sup>th</sup> Sq.</b>
ARMY SERIAL NO.:	<b>19076326</b>	GROUP:	<b>461<sup>st</sup> BG</b>
HOME ADDRESS:	<b>Diagonal, Iowa</b>	TYPE AIRCRAFT:	<b>B-24</b>
EX-REPORT NO.:	<b>???</b>	MISSION DATE:	<b>2 Apr 44</b>

POSITION	MEMBERS OF CREW	PWIB RECORDS
PILOT	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Lt., W. H. Zumsteg</b>	<b>KIA</b>
CO-PILOT	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Fuller</b>	<b>KIA</b>
BOMBARDIER	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Repko</b>	<b>KIA</b>
NAVIGATOR	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Fleber</b>	<b>KIA</b>
ENGINEER	<b>S/Sgt. Lerna</b>	<b>KIA</b>
RADIO OPERATOR	<b>Sgt. Kadlecek</b>	<b>KIA</b>
WAIST GUNNER	<b>M/Sgt. Oscar R. Ives</b>	<b>Narrator</b>
NOSE GUNNER	<b>S/Sgt. Clayton</b>	<b>KIA</b>
TAIL GUNNER	<b>S/Sgt. Allecce</b>	<b>KIA</b>

**KNOWN INFORMATION: Our plane collided with another near Bihac, Yugoslavia at about 1000 hours on 2 April 1944. We were flying at about 20,000 feet. The ship broke apart, the nose, tail and waist sections falling in separate pieces. I was knocked unconscious, regained my senses at about 5,000 feet and at 3,000 feet, managed to bail out of the waist. I was brought the dog tags of Lts. Fuller, Repko, Felber and Sgt. Clayton by the Partisans, and saw the graves in which the Partisans buried them. I do not know what happened to Lt. Zumsteg or Sgt. Allecce.**

**HEARSAY INFORMATION: The only other crew member in the waist with me was Sgt. Kadlecek, the radio operator. I was told by other members of the flight, when back in Bari later, that someone went out of the waist, which could have only been Sgt. Kadlecek. He did not have a chute on.**

<b>First Lieutenant William H. Zumsteg</b>	<b>Mr. Frederick N. Zumsteg (Father) 4502 Appleseed Avenue Chicago, Illinois</b>
<b>Second Lieutenant John C. Fuller, Jr.</b>	<b>Mrs. John C. Fuller (Mother) 650 Praetel Bouthington, Connecticut</b>
<b>Second Lieutenant Joseph J. Repko</b>	<b>Mrs. Andrew B. Repko (Father) 607 Cedar Street Freeland, Pennsylvania</b>
<b>Second Lieutenant George N. Felber</b>	<b>Mrs. Veronica Felber (Mother) 105 Burkshire Place Irvington, New Jersey</b>
<b>Master Sergeant Oscar R. Ives</b>	<b>Mrs. Edna Faye Ives (Mother) Diagonal, Iowa</b>
<b>Staff Sergeant Alvin J. Kadlecek</b>	<b>Mr. John J. Kadlecek (Father) Post Office Box 8 Sugarland, Texas</b>
<b>Staff Sergeant Antonio Lerma, Jr.</b>	<b>Mrs. Antonio N. Lerma (Mother) 1118 McDonald Avenue Lerado, Texas</b>
<b>Staff Sergeant Woodrow P. Clayton</b>	<b>Mrs. Hazel F. Clayton (Wife) 1011 West Cottage Houston, Texas</b>
<b>Staff Sergeant Andrew J. Allecce</b>	<b>Mr. Dominick Allecce (Father) 1009 Campbell Street Rochester, New York</b>
<b>Sergeant Richard Karl</b>	<b>Mrs. R. Lynch (Mother) 58 North Boulevard Cloversville, New York</b>