

**DECLASSIFIED**  
 Authority: NND 735001  
 By: NARA NARA Date: 1973

Classification changed  
 to **RESTRICTED**  
 by E. A. MURKIN, Lt. Col., AG  
 by E. A. MURKIN, Capt., AG

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES  
 WASHINGTON

4547

MISSING AIR CREW REPORT

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 F-122; Command or Air Force 8th  
 Group 355th; Squadron 354th; Detachment \_\_\_\_\_
2. SPECIFY: Point of Departure F-122; Course IN 79° OUT 160°  
 Intended Destination F-122; Type of Mission Escort
3. WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED  
Clouds at 5000 ft. (Scattered Cumulus 5/10)
4. GIVE: (a) Date 29 Apr 1944 Time 1045; and Location 30 mi West of Berlin  
 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 ( ) Enemy Aircraft; ( ) Enemy Anti-Aircraft; ( ) Other Circumstances as follows Unknown

6. AIRCRAFT: Type, Model and Series P-51B-24 A.A.F. Serial Number 43-6577
7. ENGINES: Type, Model and Series V-1650-3; A.A.F. Serial Number (a) V-301469  
 (b) \_\_\_\_\_; (c) \_\_\_\_\_; (d) \_\_\_\_\_

8. INSTALLED WEAPONS (Furnish below Make, Type and Serial Number)  
 (a) 1150313; (b) 649487; (c) 1150553; (d) 1149922;  
 (e) \_\_\_\_\_; (f) \_\_\_\_\_; (g) \_\_\_\_\_; (h) \_\_\_\_\_

9. THE PERSONS LISTED BELOW WERE REPORTED AS: (a) Battle Casualty X  
 or (b) Non-Battle Casualty 0

10. NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew 1; Passengers 0; Total 1  
 (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).

844/4090

Crew Position	Name in Full (Last Name First)	Rank	Serial Number
1. Pilot	<u>Neal, Thomas F. Jr.</u>	<u>Captain</u>	<u>0-672658</u>
2.			
3.			
4.			

11. 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	Serial Number	Contacted By	Last Radio Sighted	Saw Crash	Saw Forced Landing
1. <u>Wright, Gilbert E.</u>	<u>2nd Lt.</u>	<u>0-2045022</u>		<u>X</u>		
2. <u>Fritts, Herbert E.</u>	<u>2nd Lt.</u>	<u>0-1634775</u>		<u>X</u>		
3.						

12. 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 \_\_\_\_\_; or (c) Any other reason (Specify) Unknown
13. ATTACH AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH, MAP, CHART, OR SKETCH SHOWING APPROXIMATE LOCATION WHERE AIRCRAFT WAS LAST SEEN.
14. ATTACH EYE WITNESS DESCRIPTION OF CRASH, FORCED LANDING, OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES PERTAINING TO MISSING AIRCRAFT.
15. ATTACH A DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTENT OF SEARCH, IF ANY, AND GIVE NAME, RANK AND SERIAL NUMBER OF OFFICER IN CHARGE: WEDD, H. RUSH, Captain, A.O. 1996933

Date of Report 30 April 1944

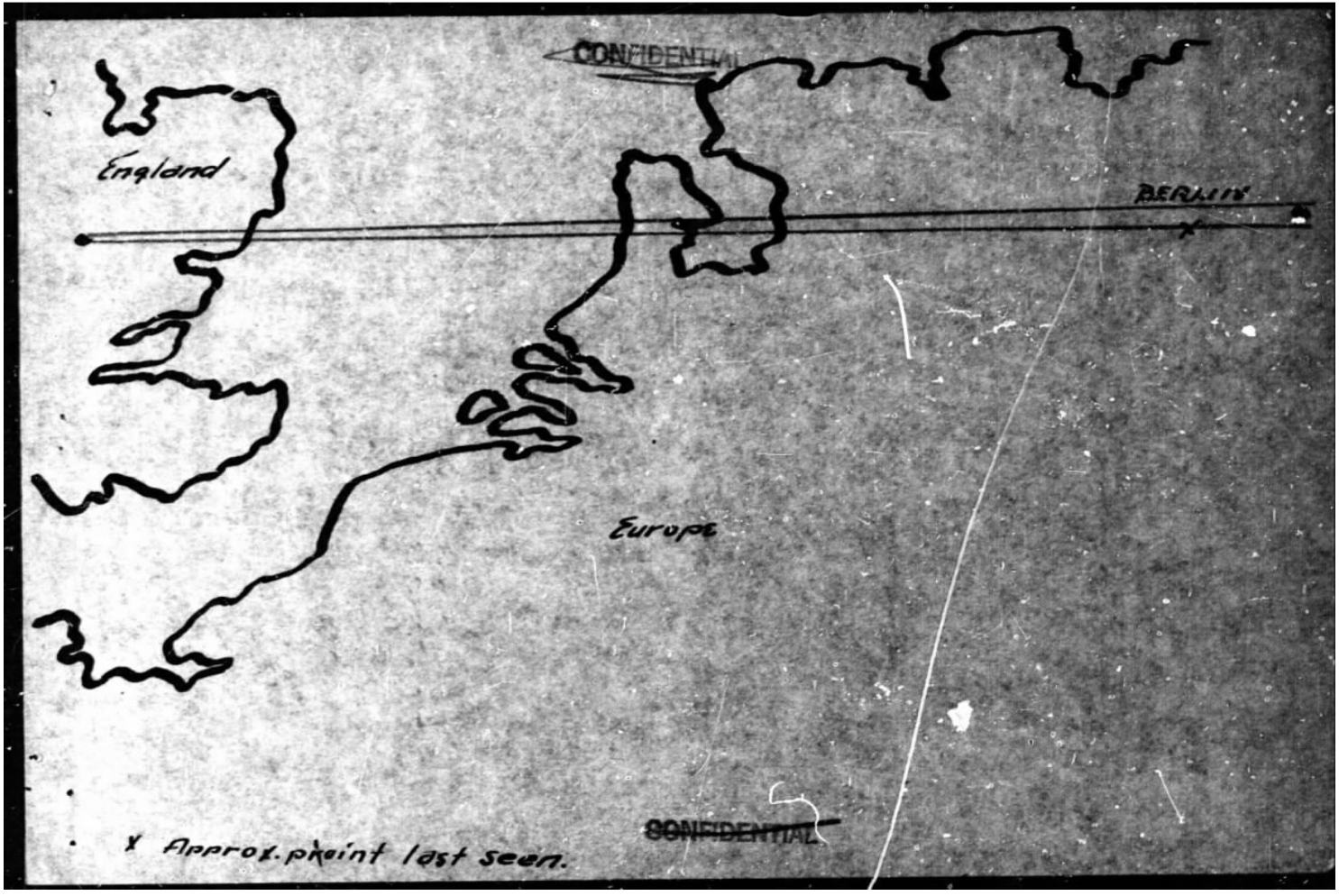
*Henry B. Richman Jr.*  
 HENRY B. RICHMAN, Jr.,  
 Capt., AG

(Signature of Preparing Officer)

S-C-B-R-E-S

*April 10'*

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~S T A T E M E N T

"On April 29, 1944, I was flying Falcon Red #3 in Capt NEAL'S flight. We had made rendezvous with the bombers and were circling area of rear box. Approximately 1045 Capt NEAL called 4 FW 190s in and then peeled off after them. I dropped my combat tanks immediately and followed Capt NEAL. I followed Capt NEAL and Lt FRITTS, his wingman, down to the cloud layer and then lost them in the clouds. I looked around and saw an FW 190 trying to position himself on the tail of a P-47. I made a sharp turn to the left and came in on the tail of the FW 190. Immediately he broke and went into the clouds which were 6 to 8/10. I started climbing to the left and called Capt NEAL on the radio but received no answer from Capt NEAL but Lt FRITTS called me and said he had been separated from Capt NEAL after his dive below the cloud layer in pursuit of the FW 190. Lt FRITTS then joined me at 16,000 feet. I called Capt NEAL several more times but received no answer. The remainder of the flight circled the area for approximately 10 minutes then climbed to 26,000 feet and proceeded home."

*Gilbert S. Wright*  
GILBERT S. WRIGHT,  
O-2045023  
2nd Lt, AC.

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"On April 29, 1944 I, 2nd Lt. Herbert E. Fritts, ASN O-1634776, was flying a scheduled combat mission. Capt. THOMAS F. NEAL was leading Falcon Red Flight. I was Capt. NEAL's wingman."

"We had followed the Group in to the rendezvous point and had spread to our respective sides of the Bombers. Falcon Squadron was flying to the right of the Bombers. At about 1045 Capt. NEAL started a gentle peel-off from 22,000 and started into a dive. I heard Capt. NEAL say "Falcon Red Flight, they are 190's. Let's go get them boys." We jettisoned our fuel tanks and dove after 4 F.W. 190's. I was indicating about 450 to 500 MPH. At about 10,000 ft. two 190's on the flanks broke away and there were two left in front of us. We followed them through a split "S" and headed straight down. We were approximately 30 miles south west of Berlin at the time. At 5000 ft. there were cumulus about 5/10 coverage. I followed Capt. NEAL to the cloud base and started to pull out of the dive. I blacked out on the pull out and when I came to I was going up at about a 30 degree angle and my altimeter read 4000 ft. I was still below the clouds and looked around hurriedly and thought I saw two ships going up into the clouds but am not sure. I went through the clouds and saw nothing. I went back down below the clouds and still saw nothing. I gave Capt. NEAL a call at about 3000 ft., did not receive an answer, circled the area to see if perhaps he had dived into the ground but saw nothing. I went above the clouds again and made another call, still no answer. I came back below the clouds and gave another call. Still I received no answer. All of this time I remained around the area I had last seen Capt. NEAL. I came above the clouds again and called Lt. Wright who was Falcon Red Three. He spotted me and I told him to give Falcon Red Leader a call because he was at 16,000 and I was climbing off the deck. Lt. Wright received no answer. We continued to call Capt. NEAL frequently for about an hour but still received no answer."

*Herbert E. Fritts*  
HERBERT E. FRITTS,  
O-1634776  
2nd Lt. AC.

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**CONFIDENTIAL**FLYING CONTROL OFFICE  
AAF STATION F-122  
APO NO. 637

30 APRIL 1944

SUBJECT: MISSING AIRCREW REPORT - CAPTAIN NEAL.

TO : COMMANDING OFFICER, 355TH FIGHTER GROUP, AAF  
STATION F-122, APO 637.

1. ON APRIL 29, 1944, AT 0843 HOURS, CAPTAIN NEAL PILOTING AIRCRAFT WR-J, TOOK OFF FROM THIS FIELD ON AN OPERATIONAL MISSION WITH THE 354TH FIGHTER SQUADRON. HIS CALL SIGN WAS FALCON 62.
2. CAPTAIN NEAL WAS FLYING NUMBER THREE POSITION IN RED FLIGHT.
3. THIS OFFICE HAD NO R/T CONTACT WITH CAPTAIN NEAL DURING THE FLIGHT.
4. WHEN CAPTAIN NEAL FAILED TO RETURN TO THIS BASE WITH THE 354TH FIGHTER SQUADRON, THIS OFFICE IMMEDIATELY NOTIFIED COMBAT OPERATIONS.
5. EVERY EFFORT WAS MADE TO CONTACT CAPTAIN NEAL ON CHANNELS "A", "B", "C", AND "D".

W. H. RUSH,  
CAPTAIN, AIR CORPS,  
SENIOR FLYING CONTROL OFFICER.