

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

**CONFIDENTIAL**  
 (Equals British Most Secret) Classification changed  
~~SECRET~~ to **RESTRICTED** Lt. Col., AG  
 MISSING AIR CRAFT REPORT by F. M. BARNICK, Lt. Col., AG

**IMPORTANT:** This report will be compiled in triplicate and submitted to the reporting organization within 48 hours of the time an aircraft is officially reported missing.

- ORGANIZATION:** Location Massicault; Command or Air Force 5th Wing; Group 2nd Bomb Op Squadron 96th; Detachment \_\_\_\_\_
- SPECIFY:** Point of Departure Massicault; Course \_\_\_\_\_; Intended Destination Naples, Italy; Type of mission Obj. Bombing
- WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED:** Clear
- Give:** (a) Date 8-4-43; Time 1403; and Location 40° 17' N - 13° 16' E of last known whereabouts of missing aircraft.  
 (b) Specify whether ( ) 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) (x) Enemy aircraft; ( ) Enemy anti-aircraft; ( ) Other circumstances as follows: \_\_\_\_\_
- AIRCRAFT:** Type, Model and Series B-17F; AAF Serial Number 42-5673
- ENGINES:** Type, Model and Series B-1820-97; AAF Serial Number (a) 41-57524; (b) 41-57526; (c) 41-57730; (d) 41-57738
- INSTALLED WEAPONS:** (Furnish below Make, Type and Serial Number)  
 (a) 12 .50 caliber (b) \_\_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_\_ (d) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (e) Browning Machine Guns (f) \_\_\_\_\_ (g) \_\_\_\_\_ (h) \_\_\_\_\_
- THE PERSONS LISTED BELOW WERE REPORTED AS:** (a) Battle Casualty X  
 or (b) Non-Battle Casualty \_\_\_\_\_
- NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT:** Crew 10; Passengers 0  
 Total 10  
 (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.)

Crew Position	Name in Full (Last Name First)	Rank	Serial Number
1. Pilot	Christman, Harold L.	1st Lt.	0-663863
2. C.P.	Kurs, Robert L.	2nd Lt.	0-734104
3. Navig.	Reek, Ronald E.	2nd Lt.	0-735070
4. Bombdr.	Mahood, William B.	2nd Lt.	0-733338
5. U.T.G.	Doone, Bernard E.	7/Sgt.	13040591
6. L.T.G.	Haffner, John J.	3/Sgt.	16093775
7. R.T.G.	Shields, Rudolph E.	3/Sgt.	53120022
8. L.T.G.	Borders, Herbert D.	3/Sgt.	19075432
9. T.G.	Brady, William T.	3/Sgt.	16127147
10. T.G.	Macey, Willis A.	7/Sgt.	31085779

- IDENTIFY BELOW THOSE PERSONS WHO ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE LAST KNOWLEDGE OF AIRCRAFT, AND CHECK APPROPRIATE COLUMN TO INDICATE BASIS FOR BASIS FOR SAME.**  
 Check only one column

Name in Full (Last Name First)	Rank	Serial Number	Contacted By	Last Sighted	Saw Crash	Saw Landing
1. Hall, H. F.	Captain	0-1699334	Radio	X		
2. Johnson, W. D.	1/Sgt.	33249441		X		
3. Kennedy, James H.	2nd Lt.	0-730688		X		
4. Lvo, Sidney J.	3/Sgt.	14054007		X		
5. Cox, Alfred W.	3/Sgt.	12072715			X	
6. Gabbart, Carl E.	3/Sgt.	35447774				X

**IF PERSONNEL ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE SURVIVED, ANSWER YES TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:** (a) Parachutes were used yes; (b) Persons were soon walking away from scene of crash yes; or (c) Any other reason (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

- ATTACH AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH, MAP, SKETCH, OR SKETCH, SHOWING APPROXIMATE LOCATION WHERE AIRCRAFT WAS LAST SEEN.**
- ATTACH A DESCRIPTION OF CRASH, FORCED LANDING, OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES PERTAINING TO MISSING AIRCRAFT.**
- ATTACH A DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTENT OF SEARCH, IF ANY, AND GIVE NAME, RANK AND SERIAL NUMBER OF OFFICER IN CHARGE HERE** \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Report August 5, 1943

**SECRET** **CONFIDENTIAL**  
 (Equals British Most Secret) Signature of Preparing Officer  
 JOHN S. BARNICK,  
 1st Lt., Air Corps.

2nd #1

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Changed to CONFIDENTIAL  
 per LAR 1200, AG 360.33  
 (9 Jun 43) OB-S-AF-M, dtd  
 5 Aug 43. O. E.

HEADQUARTERS  
 SECOND BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)  
 Office of the Intelligence Officer  
 APO 520

6 August 1943

SUBJECT: Missing Air Crew Report.

TO : Commanding Officer, Headquarters, Second Bombardment Group (H),  
 APO 520, U. S. Army.


1. Submitted as Incl I, are five (5) copies, Missing Air Crew Report, as directed by W. D. Letter A. C. 360.33 (8-21-43) OB-S-AF-M, dated May 23, 1943.

2. Submitted as Incl II, are five (5) copies Aeronautical Chart, Roma N. E. 40/10, Scale 1,500,000 drawing the approximate location where A/C #873 was seen to crash as directed by Missing Air Crew Report, Paragraph 13.

3. Submitted as Incl III, are six (6) eye-witness descriptions of the destroyed A/C and other circumstances pertaining to the destruction, as directed by Missing Air Crew Report, Paragraph 14. Officers and Enlisted Men making such reports are eye-witnesses of the destruction and also, are believed to have last knowledge of the B-17F as directed by Missing Air Crew Report, Paragraph 11, same report.

4. All personnel of the B-17F, No. 873 are classified as battle casualties.

5. Lt. Harold L. Chrismon, ASN-O-663853, pilot of #873, was picked up by air-sea-rescue on Aug. 6, 1943, along with six (6) other members of the crew. Statements of the crash is attached as Incl IV. Other statements of the other six (6) survivors will be submitted as a supplemental report upon their release from the hospital.



*Norman E. Annich*  
 NORMAN E. ANNICH,  
 Captain, Air Corps,  
 Group S-2, Officer.

4 Incls:  
 Incl 1 - Missing Air Crew Report.  
 Incl 2 - Aeronautical Charts, Roma, N.E. 40/10, scale 1,500,000.  
 Incl 3 - Eye-witness descriptions.  
 Incl 4 - Statement of Pilot. (H.L. Chrismon)  
 1st Ind.

ERS/jts

HQ 2ND BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H), APO 520, 7 August 1943.

TO: Commanding General, 5th Wing, APO 520.

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E.E.S.  
 E. E. S.

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Interviewed by  
Investigating Officer  
on August 7, 1943.

First Lieutenant HAROLD L. CHRISMON, O-663853, Pilot of B-17F No. 42-5873 whose A/C was destroyed by flak and crew had to use their parachutes.

On the bombing run, immediately after the bombs were dropped, a flak burst hit No. 2 engine and knocked five (5) large holes in the wing, put a hole through No. 2 gas tank and pieces hit the other three engines. Probably more than half the controls were shot out, the bomb-bay was shot up so that the doors wouldn't close and the plane was handling very poorly. I called up Master Haynes, who was leading the formation, asking him to slow down and lose altitude a little faster, as the No. 1 engine was smoking badly, and I thought if I could get down to the deck with the formation I would have a better chance of dodging the enemy fighters and make a landing in the sea. However, he said he was only going 150 MPH and couldn't let down any faster, so I attempted to stay in formation for a few minutes. During this time I checked up and found none of the crew injured by flak.

Flames in No. 1 engine were getting worse and No. 2 engine was just windmilling so I called up all positions and told them to stand by for the signal to bail out, and then opened the alarm bell. Then I put the plane on AFCE, pulled the throttles off and let all the other planes go by me, then picked up my chute and went back through the ship checking up to see that everyone was out. Lt. Kurs, Co-Pilot, was with me at this time. The radio operator, 1/Sgt. Wells A. Macey, couldn't get his chute on, so we worked and finally got one leg strap buckled. By this time the whole left side of the plane was a mass of flames. Lt. Kurs bailed out of the main rear entrance door, then the radio operator and I took one more look to see that everybody was out, as they were I then bailed out. It was necessary by this time to jump through some flames licking around from the left side. I had grabbed a one man life raft and had the straps around my arm, but as I jumped out the strap broke and I lost it.

I pulled the ripcord after I had dropped about 500 feet and slowed down. I was on my back at the time and the jerk was very slight. The plane was spiralling down, burning, and crashed about a half mile from me. I had a normal descent and unbuckled my straps fairly high. When it looked like I was about fifty (50) feet from the water, I took a deep breath and threw my arms up and fell out of the chute. I had just cleared the chute when I hit the water. I opened one side of my "MAE WEST" and popped to the surface, then filled the other side. I hit the water at 1415 hours as my watch stopped at that time.

I could spot wreckage about a half mile away and began to swim toward it. By the time I got about half way there, I saw one of the men crawl on a dinghy near the wreckage, which had evidently popped out when the plane went down. I called to him and found that it was Sgt. Macey. I asked him if he could paddle over and he said the raft was torn and only half inflated, so I swam over and climbed on, this took me about half an hour.

*Gold #4*  
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I knew that Lt. Kurz was in the near vicinity so we shouted for him, but did not get an answer for a long time. Finally we heard him whistle and call "Help" and so we tried to paddle over in the direction of his voice. I estimate that it took over an hour for us to reach him. He was staying afloat with no "Mae West" as it didn't work when he hit the water, probably ripped, and he had discarded it. When we got to within 100 yards we could see that he was being attacked by sharks so we tried to speed up our paddling, and finally got to him. We dragged him on the raft, completely exhausted, and he had cramps all night long. We called some more until it got dark, but didn't see nor hear anyone else. That night we couldn't sleep, because the sharks were hitting at the boat all night long and the boat was so low that we couldn't keep ourselves clear out of the water. One shark cut my heel. That night wasn't so bad, although, we got chilled and had quite a job keeping Lt. Kurz in the boat, as he was twisting around all the time.

The next day we tried to drift in a Southwesterly direction so that the Air-Sea Rescue could get us farther from land. We had four (4) little cans of water from the dinghy, we drank only one can that day. We had a little chocolate but most of it dissolved. Nothing happened until about 1800 hours when a B-26 came in sight. We had a flare pistol and a couple of flares which weren't wet, as we had held them up in our hands all that time. I shot off one of the flares and he returned and passed over us, and then circled us several times. (We learned later that he was on routine patrol but that he immediately called Air-Sea Rescue). About a half mile away from us, he began to drop out dinghies and other stuff, and we couldn't figure why he was dropping them so far away from us. He circled a few more times and then three (3) ME-109s' came up and ran him off. They circled us two or three times and then left. While the B-26 was in the vicinity we had stood up waving frantically and had fallen in the water several times and the sun went down before we got dry, so we really spent a horrible night - mighty cold.

Just before daylight we heard a plane flying in our vicinity and figured it was the Air-Sea Rescue looking for us. He went away and a little while later, when it was just light enough to see the surfaces of the water, behind us we could see a dark object bobbing up and down. It was probably 400 yards away, and we tried to paddle toward it and made slow progress. When we got within 100 yards I yelled and they answered back. They asked if we had water and we called back that we had a little, so we paddled on over and had to get to get within 15 feet of them before I recognized them as members of my crew. Lt. Beck was in very bad shape. T/Sgt. Doone was pretty bad too. Lt. Mahood was rational, but physically exhausted, and S/Sgt. Haffner was in about the same shape. We gave two of our three remaining cans of water and the four of them drank it. They had none previously. They were on two dinghys, we tied the two dinghies together and I tried to ask them how they felt but they couldn't tell much of anything. Lt. Mahood had a waterproof watch and about 0745 hours we saw a PBY searching, he missed us but about 30 minutes later a Bristol came fairly close. We all waved and got his attention and he began to circle us. He circled for 45 minutes or more and then he left and in about five minutes five (5) P-3Cs' showed up. They strung out and began to circle and circled until the PBY showed up again. He circled and landed, taxied up to where we were and helped us all on board. This was at about 0945 hours.

He took us to Bizerte and I called up the 96th Bomb Squadron from the airport, then they took us to the 56th Evacuation Hospital. The doctors said

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that several of the boys were in bad shape. Capt. Euhn came up, and talked to the doctors and they decided to let me come back to camp. The other boys will be held probably for several days.

The three missing crew members were the first to jump and I believe that they probably landed on or close to Ischia Island.

*Harold L. Chrismon*

HAROLD L. CHRISMON,  
1st Lt., Air Corps.

Lt. Chrismon is at his squadron, the 96th Bombardment Squadron (H).

The following crew members are in 56th Evacuation Hospital, Bizerte, Tunis:

2nd Lt. Robert Kurz	Co-Pilot	0-734104
2nd Lt. Ronald E. Beck	Navigator	0-735970
2nd Lt. William D. Mahood	Bombardier	0-733338
T/Sgt. Bernard E. Doone	Upper Turret	13040951
T/Sgt. Wells A. Macoy	Radio Operator	31085779
S/Sgt. John J. Haffner	Lower Turret	16093775

The following crew members are missing and are believed to have parachuted on Ischia Island:

S/Sgt. Herbert D. Borders	Left Waist	19075432
S/Sgt. Rudolph E. Shields	Right Waist	33120022
S/Sgt. William T. Brady	Tail Gunner	16127147

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