

MISSING AIR CREW REPORT

1. ORGANIZATION: Location APQ 565 ; Command or Air Force VBC
Group 36 Gomb (L) ; Squadron 8th Bomb (L) ; Detachment _____
2. SPECIFY: Point of Departure APQ 565 ; Course Varied
 Intended Destination BABO A/D ; Type of Mission Combat
3. WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED:
Broken to scattered clouds at 3,000 to 4,000 feet
4. GIVE: (a) Day 17 Month 6 Year 44 Time 1325 and Location
40 Mi NE of Babo A/D 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.
5. AIRCRAFT WAS LOST, OR IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN LOST, AS A RESULT OF:
 () Enemy Aircraft; (X) Enemy Anti-Aircraft; () Other circumstances as follows:
6. AIRCRAFT: Type, Model and Series A-20G-25 ; AAF Ser. No. 43-9395
7. ENGINES: Type, Model and Series R-2699-23 ; AAF Ser. No. (a) 42-154316
 (b) 43-104062 ; (c) _____ ; (d) _____
8. INSTALLED WEAPONS (Furnish below Make, Type and Serial Number)
 (a) See Attached Sheet (b) _____ ; (c) _____
 (d) _____ ; (f) _____ ; (g) _____
9. THE PERSONS LISTED BELOW WERE REPORTED AS: (a) Battle Casualty MIA
 or (b) Non Battle Casualty _____
10. NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew 2 ; Passengers 0 Total 2
 (Starting with Pilot, furnish the following particulars: If more than 11 persons were aboard aircraft, list similar particulars on separate sheet and attach original to this form.)

	<u>CREW POSITION</u>	<u>Name in Full</u> (Last Name First)	<u>RANK</u>	<u>SERIAL</u> <u>NUMBER</u>	<u>CURRENT</u> <u>STATUS</u>
<u>DED</u>	1. <u>Pilot</u>	<u>Fick, Charles W</u>	<u>2nd Lt</u>	<u>0-750360</u>	
<u>DED</u>	2. <u>Gunner</u>	<u>Ryan, Edward C.</u>	<u>Sgt</u>	<u>11056243</u>	
	3. _____				
	4. _____				
	5. _____				
	6. _____				
	7. _____				
	8. _____				
	9. _____				
	10. _____				
	11. _____				

11. IDENTIFY BELOW THOSE PERSONS WHO ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE LAST KNOWLEDGE OF AIRCRAFT, AND CHECK APPROPRIATE COLUMN TO INDICATE BASES FOR SAME:
 Check only one Column

	<u>Name in Full</u> (Last Name First)	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Serial Contacted</u> <u>Number by Radio</u>	<u>Last</u> <u>Sighted</u>	<u>Saw Forced</u> <u>Landing</u>
1.	<u>BROWN, James L</u>	<u>1st Lt</u>	<u>0-797457</u>		<u>X</u>
2.	<u>Gussum, George H.</u>	<u>1st Lt</u>	<u>0-799757</u>		
3.	<u>Snell, Joseph M.</u>	<u>1st Lt</u>	<u>0-796892</u>		

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) Seen in life raft
13. ATTACH AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH, MAP, CHART, OR SKETCH, SHOWING APPROXIMATE LOCATION WHERE AIRCRAFT WAS LAST SEEN.
14. ATTACH EYEWITNESS DESCRIPTION OF CRASH, FORCED LANDING OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES PERTAINING TO MISSING AIRCRAFT.
15. ATTACH A DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTENT OF SEARCH, IF ANY, INCLUDING DESCRIPTION AND EXTENT WITH NAME RANK AND SERIAL NO OF OFFICER IN CHARGE:

Date of Report 18 June 1944

/s/ Charles C. Smith, Capt., Air Corps, Comm
 (Signature of Preparing Officer)

8. INSTALLED WEAPONS (Furnish below make, type, and serial number)

NOSE GUNS

(Browning, Calibre .50, Type M-2)

Upper Guns	:	946669	947255
Center Guns:		687631	928244
Side Guns	:	946947	1149926

REAR GUNS

(Browning, Calibre .50, Type M-2)

Turrett Guns	:	676179	947587
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/s/ Charles C. Smith,
Captain, Air Corps
Commanding.

Subject: Eyewitness Description of Airplane Crash.

TO : All Concerned.

On the 17th of June I participated in a low level attack on Babo Airdrome. After I come off the target and watched Lieutenant Kellum crash and had passed over him I saw another ship directly ahead of me throwing a huge stream of smoke and slowing down. I pulled up over him and noticed that it was Lt Fick and that his left engine was covering the wing and tail surfaces with oil. The engine was still running and he was climbing as fast as he could. When he reached about 3,000 feet he tried to feather the prop but his oil pressure was all gone and he could not. He flew along for a while at about 135 to 140 m/p.h. and found that he could not keep it in the air very well. I was flying with him with 3/4 flaps down and going about the same speed as he until he slowed down so much that I passed him. He started down at the east end of Bentoni Bay and I stayed with him until I was down to about 500 feet. He made a controlled water landing and it appeared that both he and his gunner survived and were not injured. I flew over them for about 20 minutes and dropped them two first aid kits, a canteen of water, a flare pistol and some flares. I am not sure they recovered these but they hit very near them. The plane stayed up after hitting for a minute and a half. Before I left I tried to call aid for them but my transmitter was out and I could get no answer. They both appeared to be on shore as I made my last pass. The plane did not disintergrate on hitting the water.

JAMES L. BROWN
1st Lieut., Air Corps,
Pilot.

Subject: Eyewitness Description of Airplane Crash.

To : All Concerned.

After Lt Kellum crashed in the Kasira River after passing over Babo Airdrome I straightened my ship and started to pull up behind the lead element. Lt Fick was flying number three position in the lead element in plane number 43-9395. His left engine started smoking so I called and informed him of his trouble. I then pulled up alongside him to determine the extent of damage. The whole left engine was covered with oil and the engine was smoking badly. He pulled away from his element and started climbing. I followed. During his ascent his plane gradually veered to the left almost imperceptibly until he was heading in a northerly direction. I called him and told him to head 60 degrees. He did so. After reaching the east end of Bentoni Bay and to the north of it he started turning to the south toward the northeast end of the bay, losing altitude. He headed for a river mouth between two islands and made an excellent water landing against the east bank. Pilot and gunner got out and waved "O.K." to me.

GEORGE H. GOSSOM
1st Lt, Air Corps
Pilot.

Subject: Eyewitness Description of Airplane Crash.

To : All Concerned.

On June 17th at approximately 1335 Lt C.W. Fick on the left wing of Captain Sounhein passed over Babo Airdrome where he was apparently hit by anti-aircraft fire causing his left engine to smoke fiercely and to lose oil. He began to climb at approximately 550 m.p.h. to gain altitude in order to pass over the mountains immediately ahead of us. The rest of the formation went on and I stayed behind with him as also did Lt Grossom and Lt Brown. After reaching 3,000 feet he apparently got into more trouble, either could not feather his prop or else his right engine was not putting out as he had had trouble with it on the way to the target. As soon as he realized that he could not go on Lt Fick prepared to make a water landing. His heading during the approach to the water was 130 degrees and he made a very good landing. Both the pilot and gunner got out. The nose of the airplane went down in about five seconds and the tail section behind the turret was up for about a minute. Both were apparently uninjured, had the raft out and inflated.

JOSEPH M. SHALTZ,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Pilot.

SUBJECT: Search for A-20G-25 No. 43-9395.

TO : Commanding Officer, 3 Bomb Gp., APO 565.

1. On June 17, two A-20's went down in the vicinity of Babo. One was seen to go under the water immediately with no survivors. The crew of the other plane (No. 43-9593) was seen to ditch their aircraft and take to their raft. The location given at that time was in the Vicinity of Cape Kaesore.

2. The mission report stated that Thrifty Three was contacted. The pilot of Thrifty Three stated he heard no one call in regard to a downed A-20, but did hear calls from a B-25 in trouble going into Owi Island. Gardenia One was closest to the B-25 and escorted it to Owi Island.

3. On June 18, Gardenia One searched the area about Cape Kaesore with nil sightings. Thrifty Three was scheduled to search on June 19, and the latest information, as supplied by Lt. James L. Brown, of the 8 Bomb Sq., was radioed to the rescue aircraft in flight. This mission was called off immediately after this and Thrifty Three was assigned to the original area of Gardenia One, which "snafued." Thrifty Three rescued the pilot of an A-20 off Moemi.

4. Thrifty Three again attempted to search the area on June 20 with Lt. Brown, of the 8 Sq., accompanying. The mission was cancelled in flight due to the fact that fighters were grounded due to poor weather. On June 21, Thrifty One took Lt. Brown over the area he specified. Fighter cover was two planes instead of four requested for the search. A-20's enroute for a strike in this area turned back. Nil sightings were made of the men or raft. The area was thoroughly searched.

BYRON K. BROWN
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Asst Rescue Officer.

HEADQUARTERS
3D BOLBARDMENT GROUP (L) AAF
Office of the Operations Officer

JCB/get

A. P. O. 505,
27 June 1944.

SUBJECT: Extent of Search for Missing Aircraft.

TO : Commanding General, V Bomber Command, A. P. O. 713 Unit 1.

1. In compliance with paragraph 11 c., Section II, Fifth Air Force Regulation No. 35-45, the following information pertaining to crew of A-20G #43-9395, who have been missing since 17 June, 1944, is submitted:

" a. Lieutenant Charles W. Fick made a successful water landing on 17 June after being hit by anti-aircraft fire during a raid on Babo Airdrome. He landed in a river in the northeast corner of Bentoni Bay about twenty miles northeast of Cape Kabarisi. The landing was made near very marshy ground which was then muddy but not under water. The pilot and gunner were observed leaving the aircraft and arriving at the shore.

" b. Lieutenant James L. Brown, flying an A-20 made several passes over the area and dropped all supplies which he had available. An attempt at calling a PBY was unsuccessful due to radio failure. Lieutenant Brown pin-pointed his position and then returned to this station. He notified Air-Sea Rescue immediately upon his return and attempted to obtain a PBY to return the following day.

" c. The PBY which was to attempt rescue was unable to leave due to bad weather conditions. No searches could be made on the following four days as Catalinas were unavailable and bad weather conditions prevailed. On 22 June, 1944, a PBY started out but, after travelling nearly two-thirds of the distance, was recalled for some unknown reason.

" d. On 23 June, 1944, another PBY search was instituted. The area was searched for one hour and a half, but no signs of the missing crew were observed. The area was underwater at this time as the waters had risen. No signs of life were observed except for a native in a canoe. It was the opinion of the observer that no person would be able to live in this area for more than two weeks. This was the last search made for the missing crew.

" e. First Lieutenant James L. Brown, 8th Bomb. Sqdn, 3d Bomb. Gp., participated in all flights which attempted rescue of the downed aircraft."

For the Group Commander:

John C. Baldwin, Jr.
JOHN C. BALDWIN, JR.,
Captain, Air Corps,
Operations Officer.