

VLAHOS, Michael L

Servicenumber:	O-703540
Age:	<i>Not available</i>
Born:	1921, Ohio
Hometown:	Springfield, Clark County, Ohio
Family:	Louis Vlahos (father) Katherine M. Vlahos (mother) John L. Vlahos (brother) Lester Vlahos (brother) Maxine Vlahos (sister) ** Effie Margaritis (Fiancee)
Rank:	First Lieutenant
Function:	Bombardier-Nose Gunner
Division – Transport:	8th Air Force
Company – Squadron:	368th Bomber Squadron
Unit – Group:	306th Bomber Group, Heavy
Plane data: (Serialnumber, MACR, etc.)	Serialnumber: 42-97946 Type: B-17G Destination: Gelsenkirchen, Germany MACR: 8464
Date of death:	26 August 1944
Status:	KIA
Place of death:	Budberg, County of Moers, Germany
Spot:	<i>Not available</i>
Awards:	Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, Purple Heart
Gravenumber:	Plot D, Row 26, Grave 16
Cemetery:	American War Cemetery Ardennes
Other information:	It was 26th August 1944. Our target was Gelsenkirchen, Germany. We had no trouble on the route in. We reached the I.P. at scheduled time and were on the bomb run when we were hit by flak. The first burst hit our left wing and knocked off most of the outer section. The second burst struck the bomb bay and started a fire. The third burst hit in the waist and a fire started there also. I went for the small 'Fosmite' extinguisher. Looking over my head I saw all of the control wires in a jumbled condition. The fourth burst hit the right wing and knocked out numbers three and four engines. This all happened rapidly. The pilot gave the order to bail out. The co-pilot was at the controls. The pilot said to him "Get out Chuck" but the co-pilot answered "I've got the controls, I'm flying the ship. You go and I'll follow". From the statements of the crew members in the forward part of the ship I believe they left in the following manner: Navigator, Engineer, Pilot. Lt. Allen said that just before he went out of the hatch he looked up and saw Lt Rapp standing in between the two seats apparently ready to prepare to come down and bail out.

In the aft part of the ship we were preparing to bail out also. The ball turret gunner was standing just aft of the turret putting on his chute. He mentioned for me to leave. Just before I jumped through the hatch I looked back and saw the radio operator standing in the doorway between the radio room and the waist section. The tail gunner left by way of his own hatch. As I left the ship I could feel it falling off on its left wing. The crew of the ship whose wing we were flying on that day were shot down about a month later and we met them in prison camp. They said they watched our ship after it was hit. They saw several chutes and then they said the ship seemed to fall apart but it did not look like there was an explosion. The report turned in back at base was that four chutes were seen.

Statement from the Waist Gunner, S/Sgt Richard C. Huebotter

1st Lt Michael L. Vlahos first buried at Temporary American Military Cemetery Ardennes, Belgium Block C, Row 12, Grave 276.

