

8TH AIR FORCE



273

German Registration: MACR No. KU 963	2644	Service No.	Rank	Name	Duty	
Date	24 February 1944	0-797480	1st Lt.	Costales, Elmer J.	Pilot	POW
Type of Aircraft	B-17 G	0-802760	2nd Lt.	Kish, Stephen A.	Co-Pilot	POW
Serial No.	42 - 31561	0-690719	2nd Lt.	Sahner, Clifford D. Jr.	Navigator	KIA Aabenraa
Group/Squadron	95 BG/335 BS	0-669390	2nd Lt.	Skoug, Lars E.	Bombardier	POW
Code Letters/Markings		35337854	T/Sgt.	Seelig, Lester W.	Radio Op.	POW
Mission/No.	Bombing	36262342	T/Sgt.	Pechacek, George F.	Top Turret Gunner	KIA Aabenraa
Target	1) Poznan 2) Rostock	15337898	S/Sgt.	Joyce, Robert J.	Ball Turret Gunner	POW
AF Station	Horham, Suffolk 119	34249326	S/Sgt.	Carwie, Norman M.	Right Waist Gunner	POW
Location of Crash: Øster Højst about 8 miles NE of Tønder, Denmark.		16217666	S/Sgt.	McCulloch, Lennon E.	Left Waist Gunner	POW
		12165250	S/Sgt.	Hays, Edwin W.	Tail Gunner	POW
Danish Civil Defence Report:		Captain David E. Olsson:				
Allied aircraft crash landed at Vester Højst at 1620 hours.		B-17 G, 42-31561 piloted by 1st Lt. Elmer J. Costales, was hit with a head on attack of a yellow nose Fw 190. One engine was hit and half of the horizontal stabilizer was shot away; however he left the formation under control and headed for the				
		Danish coast. When last sighted the aircraft was still under attack as it went into the undercast. No chutes were seen leaving the ship.				
		T/Sgt Pechacek's parachute did not open.				

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S T A T E M E N T

All crew members with exception of pilot, navigator and myself bailed out within fifteen mile radius of Tønder, Denmark, within five minutes after plane was hit. Approx. time 1600 hours.

Emergency controls on navigator's escape hatch and bomb bays didn't function. Crew all bailed out of waist door. Lt. Sahner was shot in chest, Lt. Costales was shot in chest, my right leg was broken. Lt. Sahner was so badly injured that he couldn't bail out. He was burned with the plane.

Stephen A. Kish
2nd Lt., O-802760

S T A T E M E N T

When plane crash landed Lt. Sahner revived sufficiently to speak. The pilot who was mortally wounded attempted to lift Lt. Sahner out but was unable to do so because of his injury and other causes such as fire etc.

The pilot later related the fact that Lt. Sahner upon revival and seeing that nothing could be done requested that he be shot rather than to burn alive. Request could not be fulfilled as pilot did not have a gun. Pilot and co-pilot made heroic attempts over and beyond the call of duty to rescue navigator but could not do so because of terrific fire and danger of exploding ammunition plus their own sustained injuries from enemy fire. Lt. Sahner was later found partially burned in the wreckage. His body was removed and taken together with the other crew member and given a christian burial by the Danish people in a cemetery which, I understand, contained the bodies of other American as well as British flyers.

The people of Tønder, Denmark should be able to supply further information as they were responsible for our well being and excellent care. I suggest the use of my name in Tønder during your investigation because I was the best remembered for my ability to converse in Danish. In a recent letter which I received from there I refer you to a man who knows what took place.

Mr. Anders Petersen, Hospital Inspector.

Lars E. Skoug
2nd Lt. O-669390