

**Organizational Information**

871st Bombardment Squadron, 497th Bombardment Group (Very Heavy)  
73rd Bombardment Wing, 20th Air Force  
Isley Field, Saipan, Mariana Islands

<b><u>Aircraft Manufacturer</u></b>	<b><u>Aircraft Type</u></b>	<b><u>Aircraft Name</u></b>	<b><u>Aircraft Tail #</u></b>
Boeing Airplane Company, Wichita, Kansas	B-29-65-BW	Superfortress	44-69899

**Facts and Circumstances**

This grave marks the final resting place for six individuals who were killed while aboard this aircraft that departed Saipan, Mariana, Islands enroute to a bombardment mission at the Hiro Naval Aircraft Plant, Kure, Honshu, Japan. Comments placed in the Missing Air Crew Report were as follows: At 0110Z at coordinates 35° 00'N 135° 45'E, B-29 A-56 (#44-69899) lost #3 and #4 engines due to enemy fighter attack and both were feathered. This aircraft was able to maintain altitude and dropped its bombs but lost the formation. B-29 (A-55 Lt Evans and crew) left the formation and followed A-56, picking them up at 33° 50'N 134° 00'E at 18,000 feet. At this time both #3 and #4 engines were feathered and #3 was intermittently on fire. A-56 had dropped down to 11,000 feet and a Tojo made three passes from three and nine o'clock high before A-55 came to he help. Diving down, A-55 tried to head the enemy aircraft off and maneuvered in order to give all the turrets full play. The enemy aircraft was fired on by all gunners up to 400 yards and left smoking. At this time the right wing of A-56 broke off between the two feathered engines and the wing started to blaze causing this aircraft to crash into the ground in the vicinity of Yamagata Hidaka Gujo Mountains and blowing up. The right, left and tail gunner of A-55 witnessed this crash and the right gunner saw four parachutes open at 2,000 feet and these four were captured as prisoners of war. Their fate is listed below. Japanese records indicate these individuals were cremated after being executed and buried at the Sanada Mountain Army graveyard, Osaka, Japan. **Combat actions for this date were as follows:** 8th Air Force: 33 B-24s bomb V-weapon installation at Sottevast. 15th Air Force: 465th Bombardment Group (B-24) becomes operational, making total of twenty HB groups operational in 15th Air Force. 640-plus B-24s and B-17s (the largest force of heavy bombers dispatched by 15th Air Force: to date) attack marshalling yards at Ploesti and troop concentrations and town area at Podroraica. Fighters fly over 240 sorties in support. 5th Air Force: B-24s bomb Mokmer Airfield while B-25s hit supply areas at Wakde Island and along the coast of Maffin Bay. A-20s and fighter bombers again pound targets around Wewak and along coast of Hansa Bay, hitting supply and personnel areas, warehouses, and occupied villages. 14th Air Force: Eleven B-24s bomb docks and shipping at Haiphong. Fourteen P-40s damage bridges at Hsenwi and Wan Pa-Hsa and hit barracks and destroy several trucks at Kentung. Eight B-25s and 23 fighter bombers attack warehouse area at Chiuchiang, causing large fires. All remains recovered after the war were examined and efforts made to segregate and effect the individual identification, but it was not possible due to the circumstances of the crash and commingling of remains. Casualty date was 5 May 1945 and these remains were returned for interment at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery on 8 June 1949. Missing Air Crew Report # 14365 covers the loss of this aircraft.

<b><u>Last Name</u></b>	<b><u>First Name</u></b>	<b><u>MI</u></b>	<b><u>Suf</u></b>	<b><u>Branch of Service</u></b>	<b><u>Rank</u></b>	<b><u>Crew Position</u></b>
Croake	Thomas	J		US Army Air Forces	2Lt	Radar Observer
Hesser	Jack	R		US Army Air Forces	Flt Off	Navigator
Johnson	Howard	R		US Army Air Forces	Sgt	Right Waist Gunner
King	Wilson	K		US Army Air Forces	2Lt	Pilot
Kisti	Joseph	F		US Army Air Forces	SSgt	Radio Operator
Meier	John	A		US Army Air Forces	SSgt	Left Waist Gunner

**Other individuals on this aircraft/mission**

The three crewmembers listed below were executed or shot to death on 20 July 1945. Burial location is unknown on two of them

<b><u>CFC Gunner</u></b>	<b><u>Bombardier</u></b>	<b><u>Engineer</u></b>
Flanagan, Erle P	Foley, Harry J	Sparks, Logan M
SSgt, US Army Air Forces	2Lt, US Army Air Forces	SSgt, US Army Air Forces
Plot P Row 1 Grave 37	Burial location is unknown	Burial location is unknown
Honolulu Memorial, Honolulu, Hawaii	Not buried in any National Cemetery	Not buried in any National Cemetery

**Aircraft Commander**

McSpadden, Joe S, 2Lt, US Army Air Forces

The Aircraft Commander was executed by decapitation on 15 August 1945 after Emperor Hirochita broadcasted his surrender announcement

**Tail Gunner**

Hansser, Louis J, TSgt, US Army Air Forces

Killed in crash and burial location is unknown, Not buried in National Cemetery