

Organizational Information

870th Bombardment Squadron, 497th Bombardment Group (Very Heavy)
73rd Bombardment Wing, 20th Air Force
Isley Field, Saipan, Mariana Islands

<u>Aircraft Manufacturer</u>	<u>Aircraft Type</u>	<u>Aircraft Name</u>	<u>Aircraft Tail #</u>
Boeing Airplane Company, Wichita, Kansas	B-29-50-BW	Superfortress	42-24774

Facts and Circumstances

This grave marks the final resting place for the entire thirteen-man crew that was killed aboard this aircraft that had departed from Isley Field, Saipan, Mariana Islands enroute to Kochi, Shikoku, Japan and a bombardment mission. Weather conditions at the time of this mishap were recorded as ceiling and visibility unlimited and there were no eyewitnesses to this aircraft accident. This was listed as Mission #248 with one-hundred twenty-five (125) B-29 aircraft of the 73rd Bombardment Wing hitting the Kochi urban area and destroying 48% of the city. This aircraft departed at 1950 hours on this mission and very little is known about the disappearance of this aircraft since no radio contact was made with the tower or any other aircraft after take-off and all personnel on board were killed in the crash. The Air Sea Rescue operations were conducted by Naval Personnel from Iwo Jima, Island with no success. **Combat actions for this date were as follows:** Far East Air Force: 5th Air Force fighters fly their first mission over Japan, P-51s destroying floatplanes in Fukuoka harbor area. Fighter bombers hit resistance areas in Mankayan and Kiangan sectors. B-24s bomb runways at Mandai and Limboeng airfields. B-24s pound Batu Kawa airstrip Southeast of Kuching and def positions near Balikpapan in support of Australian drive inland. 14th Air Force: Three B-25s knock out bridge near Suicheng while. Two P-47 escorts hit nearby AA positions. Seventy-plus P-51s/P-47s continue to disrupt Japanese withdrawal, attacking transport, supply, troop, bridges, communications targets, and Japanese-held points. Targets are near Hankow, Hengyang, Paoching, Kueiyangshih, Changsha, Kweilin, Lingling, Kukong, Siangtan, Islanduho, Chiuchiang, Fahsien, Tanchuk, Lohochai, and Luichow Peninsula. The fighter bombers also hit shipping, cement plant, airfield, and barracks area near Haiphong. 7th Air Force: Two B-24s from Guam attack water storage buildings on Marcus. Thirty-six B-25s from Okinawa, attacking in two flights, hit Chiran airfield. 20th Air Force: Air echelon of XX Bomber Command, including General Joseph Smith, Commanding General, sails for Okinawa. The rest of the command sails in two lots, on 12 July and 4 August, leaving only a few small detachments in India-Burma. (58th Bombardment Group Wing earlier sailed to the Marianas). 560-plus B-29s drop incendiaries on Kochi, Himeji, Takamatsu, and Tokushima, during 3/4 July. Twenty-six others mine Shimonoseki Strait and waters at Funakawa and Maizuru during the predawn hours. All remains recovered after the war were examined and extensive efforts made to segregate and effect individual identification, but it was not possible due to the circumstances of the crash and the commingling of remains. Casualty date was 3 July 1945 and these remains were returned to Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery for interment on 17 May 1949. Missing Air Crew Report # 14923 covers the loss of this aircraft. **497th Bombardment Group History:** Constituted as the 497th Bombardment Group (Very Heavy) on 19 November 1943 and activated on 20 November. They prepared for overseas duty with B-29 aircraft and moved to Saipan, July-October 1944 and assigned to Twentieth Air Force. Unit began operations in October 1944 with attacks against Iwo Jima and the Truk Islands and took part in the first attack (24 November 1944) on Japan by AAF planes based in the Marianas. They flew many missions against strategic objectives in Japan; on numerous raids, made its attacks in daylight and from high altitude. Unit received a Distinguished Unit Citation for a mission on 27 January 1945: although weather conditions prevented the group from bombing its primary objective, the unescorted B-29's withstood severe enemy attacks to strike an alternate target, the industrial area of Hamamatsu. They were awarded a second Distinguished Unit Citation for attacking strategic centers in Japan during July and August 1945. Unit assisted the assault on Okinawa in April 1945 by bombing enemy airfields to cut down air attacks against the invasion force.

<u>Last Name</u>	<u>First Name</u>	<u>MI</u>	<u>Suf</u>	<u>Branch of Service</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Crew Position</u>
Fike	Walter	H	Jr	US Army Air Forces	1Lt	Co-Pilot
Gawron	Edward	F		US Army Air Forces	T Sgt	CFC Gunner
Griffith	John	H		US Army Air Forces	LTC	Aircraft Commander
Hermann	Kurt	J	II	US Army Air Forces	TSgt	Tail Gunner
Hill	Harry	R		US Army Air Forces	SSgt	Radio Operator
Jenkins	John	T		US Army Air Forces	Sgt	Right Waist Gunner
Johnson	Buford	P		US Army Air Forces	1Lt	Navigator
Keenan	James	E		US Army Air Forces	SSgt	Radar Observer
Lamoglia	Joseph	V		US Army Air Forces	1Lt	Bombardier Observer
Merrill	Keith	N		US Army Air Forces	Maj	Pilot
Powell	John	L		US Army Air Forces	SSgt	Left Waist Gunner
Quinn	Patrick	B		US Army Air Forces	1Lt	Flight Engineer
Wilson	William	D		US Army Air Forces	1Lt	Bombardier

Nickname of Aircraft: "Miss Hap"