

**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> |
| The Glenn L Martin Company, Omaha, Nebraska | B-29-15-MO                  | Superfortress               | 42-65231                      |

**Facts and Circumstances**

This grave marks the final resting place for six individuals who were killed aboard this aircraft that had departed Isley Field, Saipan, Mariana Islands enroute to the Tachairai Airfield, Kyushu, Japan and a bombardment mission. The last sighting of this aircraft was at 1945 hours, 18 April 1945 over the target area. Witnesses to this mishap was Sgt Virgil E Furst, Sgt Theodore B Ball, 2Lt Arthur E Wienslaw and 1Lt Ralph J Evans. Comments provided at the time of this crash investigation by 1Lt Evans were as follows: "An Irving went across B-29, A-21 (4623) from 2 O'clock high to 9 O'clock high where it turned back sharply to 5 O'clock high. The ring sight gunner on A-21 fired a continuous series of bursts during this maneuver causing damage to the Irving which began to smoke and flame. The Irving departed at 3 O'clock high and went straight over to # 2 flight. It crashed into the right wing of A-51 (5231). As a result of the crash, the eponage snapped off and the right wing broke off just outboard of # 4 engine which caused this aircraft to start spinning and tumbling to the ground with no parachutes being seen to open." It was later determined that the Japanese Irving was flown by 2Lt Saburo Mitsuo of the Japanese Army 4th Squadron. These crewmembers were initially buried in the public graveyard at Ogori village. **Combat actions for this date were as follows:** 8th Air Force: More than 750 heavy bombers attack seven marshalling yards, a rail bridge and junction, and two transformer stations in West Czechoslovakia and Southeast Bavaria. Thirteen fighter groups fly escort. Two other groups escort 9th Air Force medium bombers over Germany. Far East Air Force: On Formosa B-26s bomb Karenko airfields, B-24s hit Tainan, Giran, Toyohara, Hobi, and Soton airfields, and P-38s on sweeps hit rail and road transportation. Fighter bombers and A-20s hit Balete Pass area and support ground forces on Luzon, Negros, and Cebu. B-24s bomb Piso Point. B-25s/P-38s hit Tarakan and Sandakan. 15th Air Force: 473 B-24s/B-17s, with escort of eighty-nine P-51s, support Fifth Army offensive in Bologna area, blasting defensive positions and communications in areas around the city. Seventy-eight P-38s dive-bomb a railroad bridge at Malborghetta Valbruna, while eighty-seven others dive-bomb two railroad bridges at and Southeast of Kolbnitz. P-51s sweep Augsburg, Plzen, and Linz areas, escort reconnaissance missions flown by P-38s, and escort B-25s and C-47s on bombing and supply operations. 20th Air Force: B-29s hit Japanese airfields, as 100-plus very heavy bombers strike airfields at Tachiarai, Izumi, Kokubu, Nittagahara, and Kanoya, the same targets attacked on the 17th. All remains recovered 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 commingling of remains. Casualty date was 18 April 1945 and these remains were returned for interment at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery on 23 August 1949. Information verified from Missing Air Crew Report # 14308.

| <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> |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Anderson                | Robert                   | J                |                   | US Army Air Forces              | 1Lt                | Aircraft Commander          |
| Christensen             | Donald                   | A                |                   | US Army Air Forces              | 1Lt                | Bombardier                  |
| Franson                 | Leroy                    | E                |                   | US Army Air Forces              | TSgt               | Radio Operator              |
| Kennedy                 | Maurice                  | E                |                   | US Army Air Forces              | 1Lt                | Navigator                   |
| Kopenitsi               | William                  |                  |                   | US Army Air Forces              | Sgt                | CFC Gunner                  |
| Sodomora                | Alexander                |                  |                   | US Army Air Forces              | SSgt               | Left Waist Gunner           |

**Other individuals on this aircraft/mission**

The below two crewmembers were killed in this crash and burial location is unknown

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b><u>Engineer</u></b><br>Adams, Robert E, 1Lt, US Army Air Forces | <b><u>Right Waist Gunner</u></b><br>Smith, Raymond L, Sgt, US Army Air Forces |
|--|---|

The below three crewmembers were killed in this crash and buried at Honolulu Memorial, Honolulu, Hawaii

|  |  |  |
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| <b><u>Pilot</u></b><br>McCausland, Robert<br>1Lt, US Army Air Forces<br>Plot Q Row 0 Grave 512 | <b><u>Radar Operator</u></b><br>Aina, Pasquale T<br>Sgt, US Army Air Forces<br>Plot Q Row 1 Grave 13 | <b><u>Tail Gunner</u></b><br>Hawkins, Raymond A<br>SSgt, US Army Air Forces<br>Plot Q Row 0 Grave 1014 |
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**Nickname of Aircraft: "Gonna Mak'er"**