

DECLASSIFIED

Authority: NND 735001

By: NARA **NARA Date:** 1973

2483

Classification changed

to restricted

by S. A. BRADURAS, Lt. Col., AC

by F. W. MUEKCH, Capt., AC

Date 15 Oct 45

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By: NARA NARA Date: 1973

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WAR DEPARTMENT
 H. H. HARRIS, JR. AIR FORCES
 WASHINGTON

MISSING IN ACTION REPORT

IMPORTANT: This report will be compiled in triplicate by each Army Air Forces organization within 48 hours of the time an aircraft is officially reported missing.

1. ORGANIZATION: Location Calvi, Corsica; Command or Air Force XII AF;
 Group 52nd Fighter; Squadron 4th Fighter; Detachment ---
2. SPECIFY: Point of Departure Calvi, Corsica; Course Approx 310°
 Intended Destination Nice, France; Type of Mission Ftr-Bomber
3. WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED:
Scattered clouds at 10,000 ft and haze limiting visibility to 10-15 miles.
4. GIVE: (a) Date 2 Feb 44; Time 1445 hrs; and Location 42038°N - 07929°E
 of last known whereabouts of missing aircraft.
 (b) Specify whether (X) Last Sighted; () Last Contacted by Radio;
 () Forced down; () Seen to Crash; or () Information not Available.
5. AIRCRAFT WAS LOST, OR IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN LOST, AS A RESULT OF:
 (Check only one) (X) Enemy Aircraft; () Enemy Anti-Aircraft; () Other
 Circumstances as Follows: _____
6. AIRCRAFT: Type, Model and Series Spitfire Vg; AAF Serial Number MA-885
7. ENGINES: Type, Model and Series Merlin 55; AAF Serial Number (a) 134595/415641
 (b) _____; (c) _____; (d) _____
8. INSTALLED WEAPONS (Furnish below Make, Type and Serial Number)
 (a) (2) 20mm Hispano (b) (4) 303 Browning (c) LI-B142212; (d) RI-B150584
 (e) C-15326; (f) C-2607; (g) LO-B93249; (h) RO-V93921
9. THE PERSONS LISTED BELOW ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN LOST AS A RESULT OF:
 (a) Battle Casualty (X)
 or (b) Non-Battle Casualty _____
10. NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew 1; Passengers 1;
 Total 2
 (Starting with pilot, furnish the following particulars: If more than 10
 persons were aboard aircraft, list similar particulars on separate sheet
 and attach original to this form.)
- | | Crew Position | Name in Full
(Last Name First) | Rank | Serial No. |
|-----|---------------|-----------------------------------|------|------------|
| 1. | Pilot | HOOVER, Robert Anderson | P/O | T186546 |
| 2. | | | | |
| 3. | | | | |
| 4. | | | | |
| 5. | | | | |
| 6. | | | | |
| 7. | | | | |
| 8. | | | | |
| 9. | | | | |
| 10. | | | | |
11. IDENTIFY ALL PERSONS BELONGING WHO ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE LOST WHO LEADER OF AIR-
 CRAFT, INDICATE APPROPRIATE COLUMN TO INDICATE BASIS FOR LOSS:
 Check only one column

* Squadron's letters:

WD-R

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By: NARA NARA Date: 1973

- SECRET*
- | Name in Full
(Last Name First) | Rank | Serial
Number | Contacted
By
Radio | Last
Sighted | Saw
Crash | Forced
Landing |
|-----------------------------------|--------|------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. SMITH, Bradley (nmi) | 1st Lt | 0884184 | | X | | |
| 2. MONTGOMERY, Henry Eglinton | 2nd Lt | 0799611 | | X | | |
| 3. | | | | | | |
12. IF PERSONS ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE SURVIVED, ANSWER YES TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS: (a) Parachutes were used X; (b) Persons were seen walking away from scene of crash ; or (c) Any other reason (specify)
13. ATTACH AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH, MAP CHART, OR SKETCH, SHOWING APPROXIMATE WHERE AIRCRAFT WAS LAST SEEN.
14. ATTACH EYEWITNESS DESCRIPTION OF CRASH, FORCED LANDING, OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES PERTAINING TO MISSING AIRCRAFT.
15. ATTACH A DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTENT OF SEARCH, IF ANY, AND GIVE NAME, RANK, AND SERIAL NUMBER OF OFFICER IN CHARGE HERE See mission report of search attached. Houston, William M., Major, AG, 0427736, in charge.

Date of Report 12 February, 1944

Robert K. Russell
(Signature of Preparing O.)

ROBERT K. RUSSELL,
Major, Air Corps,
Assistant Adjutant,
52nd Fighter Group.

- 4 Incl:
- Incl # 1 - Overlay (Quint)
 - " # 2 - Statements; Lts Smith, Montgomery (Quint)
 - " # 3 - Mission Report (Quint)
 - " # 4 - Mission Report of Search (Quint)

MAR 15 1944



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(Reproduced by A-3, 63rd Fgtr Wing)

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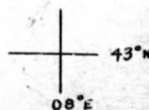
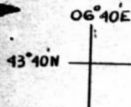
By: NARA NARA Date: 1973

FRANCE

Nice

Position of F/O Hoover
when last seen

Overlay to accompany Missing Air Crew
Report on F/O Robert A. Hoover MIA
9 February 1944. Overlay for GSCS
No. 4072, 1:500,000 Europe Air
(NE 42/6) Nice Section



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4TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
52ND FIGHTER GROUP
APO 650

9 February 1944.

COMBAT REPORT

Part 2

On 9 February, 1944 at 1355 hours, Glatter Black section of four Spit. VIs, took off from Calvi A/D on a course of 290 degrees to bomb shipping in Nice harbor. F/O Montgomery, Black-1, gave instructions beforehand that the bomb runs would be individual. After making landfall at 10,000 feet S. of the target, we made a 90 degree right turn approaching the target from the S. side. When as far N. as the target, we turned E. approaching the target in line astern about 500 yds apart. Since I was Black 4 and was last to make my bombing run, I constantly kept looking up-astern. While there were no clouds over the target, there were scattered clouds a short distance away and there was an appreciable haze which limited visibility, particularly since I was using my canopy. I half suspected the presence of e/a, so I kept a good eye to the rear, but still did not see anything. In making my bomb run, I crossed the ship at a right angle, peeled down from a stall turn and bombed from 3500 feet getting two hits on the stern of the freighter. During the approach and after the bomb run, I experienced intense light flash.

Immediately after I dropped my bombs, F/O Hoover called us to reform S. of Nice Harbor. At that time he was 2 miles S. and 2000 feet above me. A moment later, Black One, F/O Montgomery called that there were 4 FW 190's in the area. This is the last I heard from him and I never saw him after the start of the bomb run. I looked up to see four 190's S. of Nice Harbor, milling around at 5000 feet. I instructed Hoover to gain altitude and then gave full tit to join up with him. Hoover immediately went into the role. This was the last I saw of him.

As I heard the role, a FW 190 camouflaged white or light blue underneath dove down. I followed him to the deck, getting in a 20 degree deflection shot from 200 yards until someone called "Break left". I broke left and climbed back up where I found Black 2, Lt. Montgomery. As I climbed back up, I observed a parachute floating to the sea a couple of miles off Nice harbor. About this time, my transmitter went out. I could still receive however. A few seconds later, the needle of my temperature gauge fell over against the peg. I thought I had gotten a glycol leak, so I was prepared to bail out of the ship if the engine sived. As it turned out, only the temperature gauge had gone out. Almost at once two 190's made a pass at us, we broke again. As one 190 passed me, I followed him down. Just as I was getting my sights on this 190, Black Two called "Break right", which I did and sharply. The 190 overshot, but before he did, I could definitely hear that "cat-tit-tat-tat" of the 190's guns in my earphones. I did everything I could to indicate to Black 2 that my transmitter was out and that the only thing we could do was to cross weave our way out to sea. As we started to make our way toward base, I saw two power boats head out towards us from Nice harbor.

For twenty five minutes the four 190's attacked us. They easily out-climbed us, out dived us and damned nearly out turned us. Two or three e/a would always be above us, at least one on either side. One after another would pull S down through us, taking all kinds of deflection shots and

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COMBAT REPORT - Lt. Smith - Cont'd:

then would turn so sharply that we could get in no more than a short burst with a large deflection. The 190's continually tried to bait us, to get us to follow into the 190, so that another could come down on us. When I dove after one 190, it was easy to see that the e/a could pull away at will. Time after time, the e/a tried to separate us. The only way to combat these tactics was to crossweave continuously, which we did. The 190's fired at me at least eight times, firing from underneath, from head-on and from all degrees of deflection.

The pilots of these e/a were the best enemy pilots I have seen. They took every advantage of their vastly superior diving and climbing ability and they turned so sharply that it was only with the greatest difficulty that we could out turn them. At all times, they were in complete control as they coordinated and pressed home their attacks. While they took several large deflection shots, only twice did they present any sort of a target for me and that was when I followed two down, two which apparently had not seen me.

There is no doubt that our crossweaving enabled us to get back. My a/c was not damaged.

I am certain the parachute seen was not from an e/a, inasmuch as there were four 190's when the combat started and there were four 190's when the combat was broken off.

Ammunition expended: .303 300 rds. 20mm 125 rds.

/s/ Bradley Smith.
BRADLEY, SMITH,
1st Lt. A. C.

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

F. W. Schaub
F. W. SCHAUB,
Major, Air Corps.

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Authority: NND 735001

By: NARA NARA Date: 1973

NAVY FIGHTER SQUADRON
52ND FIGHTER GROUP
APO 525

9 February 1944

COMBAT REPORT

Part 2

At 1355 hours on the 9th of February, 1944, I took off on a bombing mission. Our flight, Clatter Black, numbered four Spits. I was flying no. 2 position, behind F/O Montgomery. We climbed at about 170 IAS on a heading of approximately 310 degrees, which brought us to 10,000 feet altitude and to the Hyeres Isles in about 35 minutes. We swung NE up the coast, reached Nice, went into the bombing run from up-sun in line astern. Where earlier in the day, on another mission, there had been heavy accurate 88 mm flak, not a burst was observed until the bomb run was completed. Quite a barrage of 20 mm. was thrown up as we were leaving the target, with a 1000 foot sprinkling of 40 mm. here and there. Lt. Smith had just made a direct hit on the target, been congratulated by F/O Hoover and we were calling our positions to each other when somebody called in a four ship formation at 9 o'clock high. I was approximately 1000 feet. Just as I looked up and saw them, F/O Montgomery radioed "They're 190's - watch it." There were four in line astern bearing down on a Spit who broke into them. One started down from 6,000 feet after me, I broke up into him and we fired head on until he passed just beneath me. Then all hell broke loose. Planes were everywhere. Where they weren't, the gaps were filled with explosive, 20 mm flak which Jerry tossed indiscriminately into the fray. I don't know how many times I broke, vainly looking for a buddy to hook on to. In one break, a pair of 190's were on some Spit's tail. I got a long burst towards the second from about 50 degrees. Having no time to perfect my lead, I had to break again. This time, I saw a ship being pursued by two others flying formation somewhat like ours for attack. I started down towards them, then realized they were 190's, pushed my nose down to get some deflection on the second. Just as I did, the Spit spun out in flames and I had to break to meet another head-on attack. We fired and passed as before. I ran out of ammunition at this point and began to feel the precariousness of my position. "Well they got old Hoover" called Hoover, "I'll try to stay a little longer, maybe I can get one of the bastards." By this time, I was turning, twisting all over the sky in search of a Spit to join. A few breaks later, Hoover came on the air to announce that they'd gotten him for sure this time. I saw his plane, with a 190 in trail, burst into flames, while he tried to bail out. Had to break again. A couple of minutes later, I caught a glimpse of a parachute nearing the water. Two boats, presumably "E" boats, were headed towards him. Wiping the trickles of cold sweat from my eyes, I was able to see a Spit at 12 o'clock. After I had bent the throttle a little more, I caught up to him. Then began the hectic weaving, breaking, diving, climbing dance that was finally to rid us of our enemies. I found out that it was Lt. Smith when we were half way home. His transmitter was out, so what breaks I didn't see coming, he'd whip around, with me on his tail and we'd foil the buggers. He was trying to get me to weave back and forth across him, so that in continually crossing each other, we could see more and be in a better position to meet their attack. I caught on to the idea after a short while and we wove and broke 'till they left us. I started calling

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COMBAT REPORT - Lt. Montgomery - Cont'd:

"Straight Lace" as soon as ~~we~~ were together, making for reinforcements and cover for Hoover. It took a bit of time to get the message out, due to the incessant interference of our tormentors and the difficulties in speaking with a bone dry mouth. He got it finally and after the 190's left, vectored us home. I landed with one 7.0 mm hole in the starboard wing and a hell of a bounce.

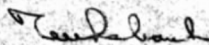
The tactics used by the 190's were diving, climbing and when the opportunity permitted turning attacks. I experienced passes from head on and all other points of the compass from high and low. My air speed indicator was clocking approximately 250 when not turning, but the Hun would slide into range with the greatest of ease. This was probably due to the speed of a dive, nevertheless, it's quite certain that they were capable of 50 to 75 ~~mph~~ in excess of our speed without trying too hard. The dorsal surfaces were camouflaged slate blue-gray, while the belly was bluish white. The cowls were painted bright yellow.

The pilots of these a/c were definitely top-notch; as shown by the way their first attack was timed, their shooting and their turning. They were turning almost as tight as we were.

Ammunition expended: 303 1200 rds. 20 mm. 300 rds.

/s/ Henry E. Montgomery,
H.E. MONTGOMERY,
2nd Lt., A. C.,

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:


F. W. SCHAUB,
Major, Air Corps.

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4TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
52ND FIGHTER GROUP
APO 650

D-JDM/wts

9 February 1944

MISSION report no. 44, 9 February, 1944.

Mission: Bomb shipping in Nice Harbor. 4 Spit V's, up 1455^{two} down 1530.

Route: Base to Nice to base.

Sightings: (1) Shipping as reported in MR 42, 9 February, 1944.
(2) 4 FW 190's, over Nice Harbor.

Results: Two bombs were observed to hit the stern of 8000 T vessel. Other bombs unobserved. Just after completion of bomb run, Spits were jumped by 4 FW 190's, from out of the sun. Two Spits, F/O Montgomery and F/O Hoover were shot down at 4338N - 0723E, at approximately 1445 hours. F/O Hoover was observed to bail out and come down two or three miles from Nice Harbor. Two enemy speed boats were observed to go out after him.

Flak: Intense, light and moderate medium, inaccurate from ship and harbor at Nice.

Weather: Scattered clouds at 10,000 feet and haze limiting visibility to 10 - 15 miles.

J. D. Morgan
J. D. MORGAN,
Captain, A. C.,
Intelligence Officer.

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By: NARA NARA Date: 1973

4TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
52ND FIGHTER GROUP
APO 650

D-JDM/wtr

9 February 1944

MISSION report no. 45, 9 February, 1944.

Mission: 6 Spit V's, up 1630, 5 down 1715 on search for F/O Hoover reported down on MR 44.

Route: Base, Cannes, N along Coast, base.

Sightings: (1) Two very small vessels off coast at Nice.

(2) Two FW 190's with in-line engines camouflaged grey near Cannes.

Results: F/O Hoover was not sighted. Two FW 190's attacked Spits. Lt. Bishop was shot down and was observed to bail out at 4326N - 0706E. Lt. Pell received a damaged wing. Major Houston and Lt. Burnett share a claim for one FW 190 destroyed. E/A's were definitely 190's. One shot down was seen to stream glycol.

Flak: Nil.

Weather: CAVU with some haze.

J. D. Morgan
J. D. MORGAN,
Captain, A. C.,
Intelligence Officer.

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By: NARA **NARA Date:** 1973

MA 2483
Inman (Plot)

J-736 Feb. 9, 1944 - - -

Hoover, Robert Anderson, F/O, born Jan. 24, 1922
Ident. Tag: T-186 546
Irish Prisoner