

464th BOMBARDMENT GROUP
APO 520 % PM NEW YORK

Chaplain's Office
Oct. 31, 1944

Dear Mr. Lee:

It is a hard thing to write such a letter as this when the person concerned is a personal friend. William has been with us quite some time and I had come to know him well. Just as everyone else who knows him, I loved him and admired him. Now that he has been reported missing I long to be of some assistance to you his parents and loved ones. Certainly you have my very deepest sympathy.

The target was in Austria and it was William's 45 mission the day he failed to return. When his ship was hit by flak it blew off some 25 feet of one wing, turned the plane completely over and sent it into a spin. Others who were on the raid saw two men bail out but they were not able to watch it very long for it disappeared into the clouds. We will hope and pray that all were able to get out before the plane struck the earth. Because many men do escape from falling planes we are hopeful.

I am enclosing the names and addresses of others who lost loved ones. You will no doubt notice that it was not entirely the regular crew that was flying that day. The enlisted men and the bombardier were not with them. The gunners they had were new men to the group and they were without a bombardier.

William's things have been put in a safe place and will be kept here for a reasonable length of time. If he does not return to use them they will be sent on to you.

As you count the days and anxiously wait for further news may God bless you and help you to be brave and patient. You have a brave son who was doing his duty willingly and well. Certainly we will all pray that he may live to enjoy the blessings for which he has been willing to sacrifice so much.

William's chaplain,

John Eastwood

(To the next of kin of William W. Lee, 1st Lt., O-815169)