

464th BOMBARDMENT GROUP
APO 520 % FM NEW YORK

Chaplain's Office
Oct. 31, 1944

Dear Mrs. Sturgeon:

At this time when sad news has come to your home I wish to express my sympathy to you, Shelby's wife and all others he holds dear. It will be a shock to you to receive such a message so soon after he arrived over seas. I am thankful that I can encourage you to hope for the best.

When over the target his plane was hit by a burst of flak which blew off part of one wing and turned the plane completely over. Two men were seen to bail out before the plane disappeared into the clouds. We hope and believe that others, perhaps all, would be able to get out before the plane struck the earth.

Although it was only Shelby's fourth mission I feel that he is to be greatly honored for all he has done. He proved himself willing and able and that is all that matters.

As is the custom with new crews the enlisted men were flying with experienced officers rather than with their own. This explains the strange names on the list which I am enclosing. They were without a bombardier on that particular day. I am sure all will receive a blessing if you correspond with some of the other mothers.

Shelby's things will be sent to you should he not return within a reasonable length of time.

I will remember your son and all his loved ones in my prayers. Let us pray that he may live to enjoy the blessings for which he has been willing to risk so much. And let us endeavor to be worthy of the blessings for which we so earnestly pray.

Shelby's chaplain,

John Eastwood

(To the next of kin of Shelby J. Sturgeon Jr., Sgt.,
17060326)