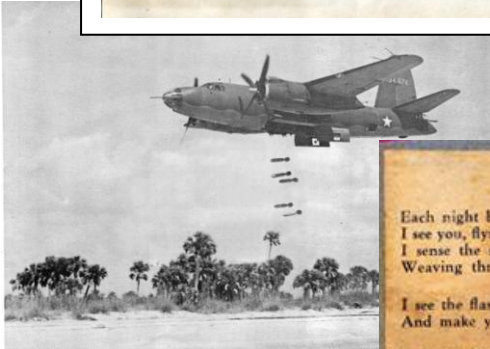


## Chapter 11 – The Rule of Three’s [v2]

It is often said ocean waves and bad news come in sets of three. First Gibby was gone. Then Mike was missing. Hazel scoured the newspapers every day looking for some news of George.



Official U. S. Army Air Force photo from A. P. J.  
**ON THE NOSE.** Huge column of smoke rises from Nazi rail junction at Busigny, in northern France, as Yank bomber of 9th Air Force gets direct hit. Yesterday nearly 1,750 U. S. bombers and fighters smashed into Germany for fifth time this week to pound an aircraft assembly plant at Tutov and rail yards at Osnabruck.



**A Prayer**

Each night before I close my eyes  
 I see you, flying through the skies;  
 I sense the straightening of your back,  
 Weaving through the murderous flak.

I see the flash of lights that blind,  
 And make your target hard to find.

I always think that I won't pray;  
 That God's had such a busy day  
 He'll be too tired to heed my plea  
 And listen to just one, like me.

But, as I toss, I realize  
 That He hears every heart that sighs,  
 God, help me through my misery  
 And bring him safely back to me!

—Carrie Tennis

This prayer was clipped from a newspaper and posted on the first page of Hazel's scrapbook.



Four B-26's of the United States Ninth Air Force begin the return trip as their bombs explode on the sea-held Schiphol Airfield, Amsterdam, Holland, one of the largest airfields in Europe



Official U. S. Army Air Force photo from A. P. J.  
**100TH MISSION COMPLETED.** Crewmen of 31st and 81st, a B-26 Marauder bomber of 9th Air Force, gather in front of plane in England to celebrate completion of 100th mission over Continent. L. to r., Lieut. Lee Rice, Johnston, Ohio; Lieut. Harry Harp, Blytheville, Ark.; Capt. Paul Shannon, Altice, Kans.; Sergt. Wallace Bond, Moss, Ark.; Sergt. Robert Johnson, Grand Rapids, and Sergt. Russ Irmsden, Boston, Mass.



**ON INSPECTION TOUR** of U. S. Army 9th Air Force Marauder medium bomber fields in Britain, Gen. Eisenhower (center) watches armors load up the bomb-bay before the B-26's takeoff on mission. The Marauder, under way out in their life for bomber "lib."

### Marauders' second raid

Striking for the second time yesterday, Marauders and Havoc light bombers of the Ninth Air Force attacked in the evening military objectives in Northern France and the Poix airfield near Abbeville.

The bombers were escorted by R.A.A.F., R.N.Z.A.F. and Allied Spitfires.

Earlier in the day more than 150 Marauders had to circle their targets till they could find holes in the clouds to bomb objectives along the northern coast of France.

Small forces of R.A.F., R.C.A.F. and Allied Bostons, Mitchells and Spitfire bombers also attacked military objectives in Northern France.

*Sent from England*

### Flak was weak

Flak, too, was generally weak, and only one plane is missing from the whole day's operations. These were the targets:

Bostons and Mitchells, with Spitfire escort—Hirson, Northern France.

Fortresses and Liberators, with Mustangs and Thunderbolts—Pas de Calais.

Mustangs and Thunderbolts—Namur and Haine St. Pierre, Belgium.

Fortresses and Liberators, with Thunderbolts, Lightnings and Mustangs—marshalling yards at Brussels (Belgium), Rheims, Troyes, Metz and Sarreguimines (France).

Marauders and A-20 light bombers, with Spitfires and Mustangs—Douai and Mantes-Gassicourt (France) and Charleroi-Montignies and Monceau-sur-Sambre, near Charleroi (Belgium).

## Atlantic Wall Raids Resume On a Big Scale

By WALTER CRONKITE

London, May 15 (U.P.)—Some 1,200 Allied bombers and fighters, paced by B-17 Flying Fortresses and B-24 Liberators, blasted French coastal fortifications, railway and airfield targets today, roaring through heavy clouds over the Continent to maintain the pre-invasion pressure on Hitler's Atlantic Wall.

Resuming heavy bomber operations after bad weather Sunday broke a non-stop month-long assault, 200 Fortresses and Liberators made the short flight to the bomb-pitted Pas-de-Calais region of northern France shortly after breakfast.

### All Bombers Return.

Escorted by some 200 P-51 Mustang fighters of the 8th Air Force, the American fliers reported "eight-tenths" cloud over the French coast, and worse inland. Temperatures at 20,000 feet were 20 below zero.

No enemy fighters rose to combat the bombers as they dumped hundreds of tons of explosives and fire bombs on Field Marshal Gen. Karl von Rundstedt's anti-invasion defenses. All bombers returned safely. One fighter was missing.

Lieut. Claude E. Wilson, Fortress lead bombardier from Dallas, Texas, said: "Despite the cloud, we had a good bomb run and put our bombs right in there."

### Criel Airfield Blasted.

As the bombers returned, other Allied air fleets roared across the Channel to continue the bombardment of the enemy's defenses.

U. S. 9th Air Force B-26 Marauders and A-20 Havocs attacked a big freight yard in northern France and the Criel airfield, one of the belt of airdromes circling Paris, during the morning. Escorted by P-38 Lightning fighters, the bombers set fire to the main hangar. The medium and light bombers met no enemy fighters. All returned safely.

Escorted American P-47 Thunderbolt fighter-bombers also were over occupied France, pounding military installations in the north.

### Thunderbolts Strike

U. S. 9th Air Force Marauders and Havocs attacked a big freight yard in northern France and the Criel Airfield, one of the belt of Nazi Airdromes circling Paris. Escorted by Lightnings, these bombers set fire to the main hangar 25 miles north of the old French capital. They met no enemy fighters and all returned to their bases.

American Thunderbolt fighter-bombers also were over France, planting their loads on military installations in the north.

Clearing weather before dawn permitted fast-flying RAF Mosquitos to dart to Cologne to give that German industrial and rail center another hammering. Military objectives in France and the Low Countries also were bombed and mines were laid in enemy waters. No British plane was lost.

### Marauders to Fly Without Paint

A U. S. Medium Bomber Base in England, May 13 (P).—American B-26 Marauder bombers attacking German installations are adopting the practice of American heavier bombers and will fly again with silver sides and bellies. Unpainted planes are considerably lighter, can fly 10 miles an hour faster and yet are no more conspicuous. Paint will be left on the planes' tops, however, to blend the machines with shrubbery while grounded and to protect fliers' eyes from glare.

### Lighter Bombers In Wide Attacks

NAPLES, May 16 (AP).—Poor visibility grounded the heavy bombers of the Mediterranean Army Air Force yesterday, but Marauder (B-26) and Mitchell (B-25) medium bombers were sent against Italian harbors, bridges and industrial installations, flying a total of 1,800 sorties.

Mitchells attacked harbor installations at Piombino, scoring hits on the docks and starting several fires. They lashed at steel works in Portoferraio, and a railway bridge at Orvieto, probably cutting both approaches. Marauders went after rail bridges at Pontedera, the Pisa viaduct north of Livorno harbor on the Ligurian Sea, and Acona, on the Adriatic coast.

Heaviest attack by the Mitchells was on the steel foundry, docks, warehouses and shipping at Portoferraio, which is on the island of Elba. The bombers caught two medium-sized vessels steaming out of the harbor and trapped one in a full bomb pattern.

Highlights of these attacks were two major operations by the B-26 Marauders of the 9th Air Force, bringing their total to 15 major blows in the last 10 days. In their first attack the Marauders pounded vital railway spans at Liege-Seraing and Liege-Renoy, far inside Belgium, losing five planes in a furious German anti-aircraft barrage.

Later in the day, they returned to smash the rail center of Amiens and other rail and military targets in northern France and Belgium.

And then, just after she put these encouraging clipping in her scrapbook ...

0-666342  
1/Lt. Geo. W. Parker, AC  
546 B. Sq. - 397 B. Gr  
APO # 140 7th. NYNY

U.S. AIR MAIL SERVICE  
568  
MAY  
12  
1944  
A.P.O.

Mrs. Geo. A. Hofmann  
69 West 104th St.  
New York City (17)  
New York

Geo. W. Parker

Written  
May 11-44

Letter received from my  
Georgie's pilot, before I got  
my telegram from the War  
Dep't.

Thursday 11 May

Dear Hazel →

Want to let you in on the secrets of Merry England — what a place! Honestly, have intended writing you & letting you know just how punk your husband really is. Thought you'd enjoy hearing that.

As George has told you, we had a nice trip over — he & I came different ways, but ended up together anyhow. Our ship "Missouri Mule II" has pluggd along swell — and our crew is one of the best. Guess you knew that before we left! We have had quite a time over here! Geo. & I work pretty close together having to get up at the same times etc. Our huts are close — he probably told you who his hutmates were.

I wrote Lois & ask if she had written you or vice versa — I'll give you her address. She'd be glad to hear from you. I don't believe you'll get any mail from George for awhile, and I'm telling you this first, because I think you'd want to know. Secondly, I know you'll wonder why letters stop for awhile. Please take this as I tell you & let it go at that for I will write you as soon as I am free to do so & tell you all you'd want

to know. Mainly, I want you to know that everything is O.K. Believe what little I tell you now then you'll have the ease of mind you should have. I don't ~~want~~ want you to get excited over me telling you this either for you will be notified why letters have stopped for awhile later. I just want you to remember that I know George is O.K.

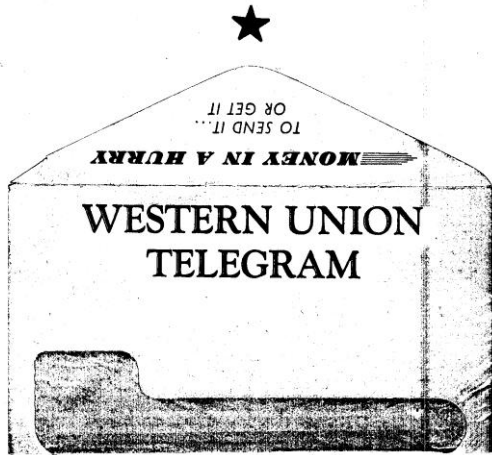
This all may sound a bit hazy to you - I hope you'll understand. Write me how this finds you & by then I can write you a big letter. It's not anything serious & perhaps may even be a bit of luck.

How's that big boy? I saw some pictures of him the other day. My daughter Peggy is going to catch up with him one of these days. Ha!

Oh yeah! I forgot to tell you - that leg of a husband is a buddy of mine & we sure think a lot of him. I'll see you later - keep the chin up & you'll hear from the <sup>your</sup> old man pretty soon.

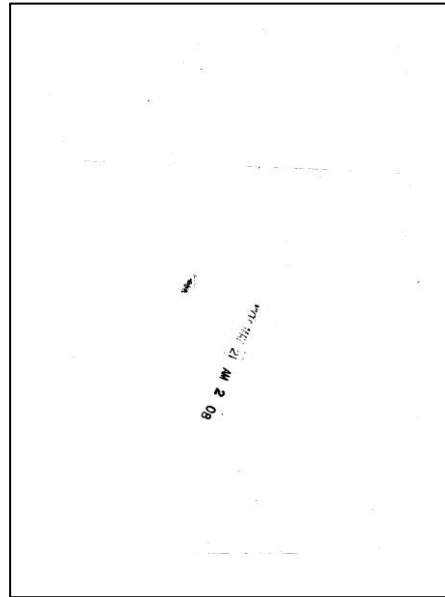
Best wishes always,

George M. Parker



"This is it"

Received May 31st, 1944



**CLASS OF SERVICE**  
 This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

# WESTERN UNION

1201

SYMBOLS	
DL	= Day Letter
NL	= Night Letter
LC	= Deferred Cable
WCL	= Cable Night Letter
	Ship Radiogram

A. N. WILLIAMS  
 PRESIDENT

The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination.

WU29 44 GOVT=WASHINGTON DC 21 1209A

MRS HAZEL J HOFMANN=  
 AR 69 WEST 104TH ST NYK:

(50)  
 MAY 31 1944  
 53

THE SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES ME TO EXPRESS HIS DEEP REGRET THAT YOUR HUSBAND SECOND LIEUTENANT GEORGE A HOFMANN HAS BEEN REPORTED MISSING IN ACTION SINCE EIGHT MAY OVER FRANCE PERIOD IF FURTHER DETAILS OR OTHER INFORMATION ARE RECEIVED YOU WILL BE PROMPTLY NOTIFIED=  
 DUNLOP ACTING ADJ GENERAL.

WAR DEPARTMENT

mao

IN REPLY REFER TO:

THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

25 May 1944.

AG 201 Hofmann, George A.  
PC-N ETO 067

Mrs. Hazel J. Hofmann,  
69 West 104th Street,  
New York, New York.

Dear Mrs. Hofmann:

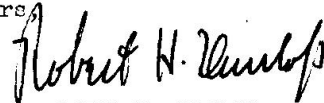
This letter is to confirm my recent telegram in which you were regretfully informed that your husband, Second Lieutenant George A. Hofmann, O-741,310, Air Corps, has been reported missing in action over France since 8 May 1944.

I know that added distress is caused by failure to receive more information or details. Therefore, I wish to assure you that at any time additional information is received it will be transmitted to you without delay, and, if in the meantime no additional information is received, I will again communicate with you at the expiration of three months. Also, it is the policy of the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces upon receipt of the "Missing Air Crew Report" to convey to you any details that might be contained in that report.

The term "missing in action" is used only to indicate that the whereabouts or status of an individual is not immediately known. It is not intended to convey the impression that the case is closed. I wish to emphasize that every effort is exerted continuously to clear up the status of our personnel. Under war conditions this is a difficult task as you must readily realize. Experience has shown that many persons reported missing in action are subsequently reported as prisoners of war, but as this information is furnished by countries with which we are at war, the War Department is helpless to expedite such reports. However, in order to relieve financial worry, Congress has enacted legislation which continues in force the pay, allowances and allotments to dependents of personnel being carried in a missing status.

Permit me to extend to you my heartfelt sympathy during this period of uncertainty.

Sincerely yours,



ROBERT H. DUNLOP  
Brigadier General,  
Acting The Adjutant General.

Lon Taylor

AVENUE  
YORK 18  
AND  
HASSETT  
ING ISLAND

May 26, 1944

Mrs. George Hoffman  
69 West 104 Street  
New York City

Dear Mrs. Hoffman,

We were sorry you have had such a disturbing telegram from the government but we do feel things will turn out alright after reading the letter from his pal.

I called the Army Relief this morning and talked with Lt. Francis and he said that "missing in action" was not too bad news in the Air Force. He interpreted it as either "in the hospital or a prisoner of war". George I know is a resourceful fellow and he has you and his precious baby to live for so he will make every effort to contact you if he is a prisoner or get well if he is in a hospital. We are all pulling hard and praying that soon you will receive some definite word and urge you to put your trust in Divine Power knowing that Power will bring him through.

With our best wishes to you and for George's safety.

Sincerely,



Grace M. Grandstaff  
Employee Relations  
Counselor

GMG:bf



ARMY SERVICE FORCES  
Office of Dependency Benefits  
Newark 2, New Jersey

SPFNU 201 Hofmann, George A.  
( 19 May 44 ) ASN O-741,310  
BD 89197

3 June 1944

Mrs. Haxel J. Hofmann,  
69 West 104th Street,  
New York, New York.

Dear Mrs. Hofmann:

Every person in the military service designates an "emergency addressee" to whom the War Department is to send communications concerning him when the occasion arises, and the records of The Adjutant General's Office show that you are the one to be so addressed in the case of the person named above.

This office having been advised that a telegram of information has already been sent you, it now becomes its duty to inform you concerning the provisions which Congress has made for the welfare of the dependents of those who by service to their country are prevented from continuing such provisions themselves.

It is requested and presumed that you will see that these advices reach those whom they greatly concern for it is only through you that contact with them can be established.

Public Law 490 - 77th Congress contains a provision whereby (with certain exceptions) "any person who is in active service and is officially reported missing, missing in action, interned in a neutral country or captured by the enemy shall, while so absent, be entitled to receive or to have credited to his account the same pay and allowances to which such person was entitled at the beginning of the absence or may become entitled to thereafter."

The act not only authorizes that any allotments in effect at the beginning of such an absence be continued (for a period the length of which depends upon circumstances but may be assumed as 12 months until other facts are known) but provides that new allotments may be made, or existing allotments increased by authority of the Secretary of War, to provide for the support of dependents and to pay the premiums on insurance policies of the person in service.

The dependents eligible under this Act include the wife, and unmarried children under the age of 21 years. Certain other relatives who are in fact dependent upon the service person may also be granted allotments from the pay accruing to him under the Act, including his mother, step-children, and adopted children.

The Act does not warrant the allotting of more than is reasonably necessary to meet the purposes for which it is intended. Although an application for an increase



in an allotment previously established (either by the person himself for such a purpose or under the Act) will be considered, the necessity for such an increase must be clearly shown before an increase will be granted.

There are also provisions in the Act which under these circumstances may authorize the transportation, to the point selected by them, of dependents and household belongings.

The American Red Cross is prepared to assist those who may wish their eligibility considered for any of the benefits which Congress has provided for the dependents of persons in the military service. The nearest local Chapter will gladly furnish the necessary application forms and assist in their preparation and submission. It will be appreciated if that channel be first approached as it will tend to limit correspondence and bring the situation to the attention of this office in a form which will expedite determination and payment.

In any case where insurance is known to be in effect, provision should be made for the continuation of premium payments and an allotment is available for such purposes even though none may be required for the support of dependents.

Allotments already in effect for the payment of insurance premiums will be automatically continued. Any question concerning Government insurance should be addressed to the Veterans' Administration, Washington, D. C.

Communications concerning allotments should be addressed to Dependency Allotment Section, Office of Dependency Benefits, Newark 2, New Jersey.



H. N. GILBERT  
Brigadier General, United States Army  
Director

ADDRESS REPLY TO  
COMMANDING GENERAL, ARMY AIR FORCES  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

ATTENTION: AFPPA-3

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY AIR FORCES  
WASHINGTON



AAF 201 - (4429) Hofmann, George A.  
0741310

June 15, 1944

Mrs. Hazel J. Hofmann,  
69 West 104th Street,  
New York, New York.

Dear Mrs. Hofmann:

Under date of May 19, 1944, The Adjutant General notified you that your husband, Second Lieutenant George A. Hofmann, had been reported missing in action over France since May 8th.

Further information has been received indicating that Lieutenant Hofmann was a crew member of a B-26, (Marauder), bomber which departed from England on a bombardment mission to France on May 8th. Details are not available, but the report indicates that your husband's bomber was last seen at about 10:15 a.m. over France and that its loss is believed to have been caused by enemy antiaircraft fire. The crew members of accompanying planes were unable to furnish any other information with reference to the disappearance of this bomber.

Due to necessity for military security, it is regretted that the names of those who were in the plane and the names and addresses of their next of kin may not be furnished at the present time.

The great anxiety caused you by failure to receive more details concerning your husband's disappearance is fully realized. Please be assured that any additional information received will be conveyed immediately to you by The Adjutant General or this headquarters.

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "E. A. Bradunas".

E. A. BRADUNAS,  
Major, A. G. D.,  
Chief, Casualty Branch,  
Personal Affairs Division,  
Assistant Chief Air Staff, Personnel.

This must have been one of the most stressful times in my mother's life – and at this point, only God knows where my father might be and how he is doing. Hazel wrote the following in her scrapbook in her always beautiful cursive:

"Hope"

So frail a thing, and yet how strong  
So heartening when dreams go wrong  
In fear and darkness we may grope  
But how things change when we find hope

It's always there, this cheerful friend  
Prepared its courage vast to lend  
To those who feel they cannot win,  
To find it, merely raise your chin

Just gaze aloft, and from the skies,  
As if it came from God's own eyes  
You'll gather strength with life to cope  
You'll taste the poor man's nectar —  
Hope