

THREE HUNDRED & FORTY-FIFTH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AC
NINETY-EIGHTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP
APO 520

12 September 1944.

S T A T E M E N T

On 12 September 1944, while on mission to attack engine factory near Munich. I witnessed a mid-air collision between two aircraft of 345th Squadron, from my position as tail gunner on White "A" (#823) of which Lieutenant Eckles was pilot. Our aircraft was in number three position of the box as we approached the target area, being about twenty minutes (60 miles) from I.P. and at about 20,000. At this point I heard over the inter-phone that our box leader, Captain Nelson, in #364 White "D" had just feathered a propeller on his number three engine and was turning back. At that time Yellow "K" which was supposed to be flying number ~~XXX~~ four position, was flying at 6:00 o'clock on our tail approximately 200 feet from our aircraft. White "H" which was supposed to be flying number six position, but which was then out of position, tried to retain to number six position, evidently not seeing Yellow "K". White "H" came into a position near Yellow "K" at about a thirty degree angle and continued this direction until it collided with Yellow "K". The right wing tip of White "H" struck the fuselage of Yellow "K" just aft of the top turret on the left side. Five to eight feet of the wing tip of White "H" crumpled and fell off. The two aircraft seemed to cling together in this position for a second or more and then broke apart. White "H" went into an immediate spin, off to the left. Yellow "K" made a very sharp peel off to the right, held it for a few seconds and then went into a spin to the right. These aircraft were within two hundred feet of my position at the time of the collision and after going into their spins. I lost sight of them for a short time due to the limited vision imposed by my position. I then saw three chutes appear. After about two or three minutes I again saw the aircraft in their same spinning attitudes at about a 5,000 foot altitude. They were breaking into pieces, and parts falling off. I saw them continue their fall until they seemed to blend with the terrain, where I lost sight of them.

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