



### Personal info

Full name

**WEMPE, John Robert**

Date of birth

**2 June 1916**

Age

**27**

Place of birth

**Cumberland, Allegany County, Maryland**

Hometown

**Cumberland, Allegany County, Maryland**

### Military service

Service number

**O-687653**

Rank

**First Lieutenant**

Unit

**368th Bombardment Squadron,  
306th Bombardment Group, Heavy**

Awards

**Silver Star,  
Purple Heart,  
Air Medal**

### Death & Grave

Status

**Killed in Action**

Date of death

**22 February 1944**

Cemetery

**American War Cemetery Margraten**

| Plot | Row | Grave |
|------|-----|-------|
| J    | 9   | 22    |

## Immediate family

### Members

**Joseph U. Wempe (father)**  
**Mary A. (Brinker) Wempe (mother)**  
**Joseph L. Wempe (brother)**  
**Josephine E. Wempe (sister)**  
**Frederick L. Wempe (brother)**  
**Leo F. Wempe (brother)**  
**Mary L. Wempe (sister)**  
**Helen E. Wempe (sister)**  
**Lola M. Wempe (wife)**

## Plane data

### Serial number

**42-31406**

### Data

**Type: B-17G**  
**Nickname: Alexander**  
**Destination: Bernberg, Germany**  
**Mission: Bombing of the aircraft production center**  
**MACR: 2650**

## More information

John R. Wempe enlisted in Baltimore, Maryland on 4 June 1941. He complete training and received his wings and commission as second lieutenant at Ellington Field, Houston, Texas in 1943.

The airplane was attacked by German fighters and broke into pieces at high altitude. Fragments were found in a circle about 2 km wide. the middle portion of the fuselage with the middle portion of the wings came down about 500 meters south of Dernbach.

Five crew members were killed and initially buried at the cemetery of Dernbach. Five men survived and were taken prisoner.

1st Lt Wempe was awarded the Silver Star Medal posthumously for his actions on the day of his death. The citation cited: For gallantry in action as a member of the 368th Bombardment Squadron, 306th Bombardment Group (Heavy), in combat on 22 February 1944. Lt Wempe was co-pilot of his airplane on a bombardment mission to Bernberg, Germany. After leaving the target, the airplane, which he was piloting at the time, was attacked by six enemy fighters. The airplane was raked with gunfire and Lt Wempe was hit and wounded mortally. Despite his wounds and with the airplane badly damaged and in flames, Lt Wempe manifested coolness, loyalty, and bravery in keeping the airplane under control to enable his crew to bail out.

## Photos



Source of information: Andre Koch, Raf Dyckmans, [www.wwiiimemorial.com](http://www.wwiiimemorial.com), [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov) - WWII Enlistment Record, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) - 1930 Census / Wempe Family Tree, [www.fold3.com](http://www.fold3.com) - MACR, [www.8thafhs.com](http://www.8thafhs.com), General Orders No. 121 - 17 October 1946), [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com) - The Cumberland News

Photo source: [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com) - Fred Munckhof, [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com) - The Cumberland News