



Personal info

Full name

LARSEN, Lars Edward "Babe"

Date of birth

6 January 1913

Age

31

Place of birth

New York

Hometown

Mountain View, Mercer County, New Jersey

Military service

Service number

32778375

Rank

Sergeant

Unit

**701st Bombardment Squadron,
445th Bombardment Group, Heavy**

Awards

**Purple Heart,
Air Medal**

Death & Grave

Status

Killed in Action

Date of death

27 September 1944

Cemetery

American War Cemetery Margraten

Plot	Row	Grave
A	5	24

Immediate family

Members

Erik Larsen (father)

Caroline G. (Korst) Larsen (mother)

Hilda M. Larsen (sister)

Erick Larsen (brother)

Louise A. Larsen (sister)

Harold F. Larsen (brother)

Elizabeth M. Larsen (sister)

Helen H. (Ralston) Larsen (wife)

Plane data

Serial number

42-30579

Data

Type: B-24J

Nickname: Little Audrey

Destination: Kassel, Germany

Mission: Bombing of the Henschel aviation industry

MACR: 9761

More information

Sgt Lars E. Larsen was employed by Wright Aeronautical Corporation of Paterson before he enlisted in the services about 20 months ago

Moments after the tail gunner, Harry G. Twigg, shouted into the interphone, "Fighters, six o'clock", exploding shells were hitting the plane while others exploded in close proximity.

The left inboard engine spewed flames reaching back to the left rudder. There was a fire inside the plane on the command deck, over the bomb bays. The oxygen and hydraulic systems were shot out, as were our radio and intercom. The right rudder was flapping wildly as it clung to the stabilizer by the middle hinge. The upper surfaces of the wings and fuselage were riddled with bullet and shell holes. The top of the tail turret was open like a tin can. Two feet of wing and flap were missing off of engine number two.

The attack was over in about five minutes. At that moment 'Little Audrey' was alone. The pilots were working to shut down engine number two. It would not feather. The fuel valve was closed off and the fire died out. Twigg, the tail gunner, was wounded in several places and put out a small fire. The waist gunners were severely wounded. There was a strong odor of gasoline on the flight deck. The bomb bay doors were opened to reduce the hazard.

After losing some altitude, the oxygen system was down, with diminishing power, they flew westward hoping they might reach an area held by advancing Allied forces. About fifteen minutes after the attack ended, a single engine fighter came upon their rear. The pilot changed course and showed his AFF insignia. It was a P-51. He came abreast the left side and motioned to his ear phone, but the B-24's radio was down. As there was nothing he could do, he departed.

When they crossed the Rhine river at about 800 feet, they encountered 20mm ground fire. The pilot, Donald N. Reynolds, dropped lower to escape the fire - to no avail. To prepare for the crash the crew took their ditching positions. Shells were hitting almost until it crash landed. The point of landing was near the railway station in Polich, at about noon, local time.

Badly damaged the airplane crashlanded in the vicinity of Polch, 30 km west of Koblenz.

Within a few minutes armed soldiers arrived by truck. They sought to make an opening to the flight deck to permit several men to get free from the wreck. In the rear, the waist gunner, Lars Larsen, was dead, probably hit by small arms fire when the plane was at low altitude.

Seven crew members survived of which some were badly wounded. They were taken prisoner. Beside Sgt Larsen, Sgt Robert M. Long, the nose turret gunner, didn't survive. He died in a hospital in Bendorf.

Photos



Source of information: Peter Schouteten, Raf Dyckmans, www.wwiimemorial.com, www.ancestry.com - Family Tree

Photo source: Peter Schouteten, Anthony L. Destro