



### Personal info

Full name

**SWAIN, Lawrence Harvey**

Date of birth

**5 June 1914**

Age

**30**

Place of birth

**San Luis Obispo County, California**

Hometown

**Imperial, California**

### Military service

Service number

**39279733**

Rank

**Technical Sergeant**

Unit

**836th Bombardment Squadron,  
487th Bombardment Group, Heavy**

Awards

**Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster**

### Death & Grave

Status

**Killed in Action**

Date of death

**24 December 1944**

Cemetery

**American War Cemetery Henri-Chapelle**

Plot	Row	Grave
H	5	2

## Immediate family

### Members

**Jerry B. Swain (father)**  
**Harriet (Kester) Swain (mother)**  
**Charles J. Swain (brother)**  
**Clarence W. Swain (brother)**  
**Halcey L. Swain (brother)**  
**Felix R. Swain (brother)**  
**Raphaela J. Swain (wife)**

## Plane data

### Serial number

**44-8444**

### Data

**Type: B-17G**  
**Nickname: Treble Four**  
**Destination: Babenhausen, Germany**  
**Mission: Bombing of the airfield**  
**MACR: 11552**

## More information

T/Sgt Lawrence H. Swain enlisted in Los Angeles, California on 27 January 1943.

The mission fell fifteen minutes behind schedule because of problems assembling the massive force, and the 487th missed its rendezvous with escorting P-51 fighters because the fighters were late in arriving due to the weather. The lead bomber also experienced an intermittent problem with one of its four engines and was attacked by German ME-109 fighters while still over Allied-held territory in Belgium.

The plane fell away from the formation almost immediately and Brig Gen Castle instructed the deputy commander by radio to take over the lead. The B-17 struggled with control and moved some distance away from the protection of the bomber force, where it was again attacked. The pilots attempted to return to the bomber column but a third attack set both engines on the right wing on fire. Castle ordered the bomber abandoned but it spun into a dive. The pilots recovered from the dive and seven of the nine crewmen parachuted. The pilot was observed in the nose of the airplane hooking on his parachute, with Castle still at the controls, when the fuel tank in the burning right wing exploded, putting the B-17 into a spin from which it did not recover.

Of the ten crew members, six survived the crash.

An eyewitness said having observed a man falling down on a non opening parachute. This indicates that Swain might have been killed by the exploding plane and blown free, or that his parachute had failed.

T/Sgt Lawrence H. Swain first buried at the Temporary American Military Cemetery of Fosse, Belgium.

## Photos



Source of information: Peter Schouteten, Rik Verhelle, Terry Hirsch, [www.wwiimemorial.com](http://www.wwiimemorial.com), [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov), [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) - U.S., Headstone and Interment Records for U.S. Military Cemeteries on Foreign Soil

Photo source: Rik Verhelle, [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com) - Paul Webber