



Personal info

Full name

HEWITT, Richard Winter "Bud"

Date of birth

16 December 1920

Age

24

Place of birth

Alden, Freeborn County, Minnesota

Hometown

Portland, Jackson County, Oregon

Military service

Service number

O-1824315

Rank

Second Lieutenant

Unit

**702nd Bombardment Squadron,
445th Bombardment Group, Heavy**

Awards

**Purple Heart,
Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters**

Death & Grave

Status

Killed in Action

Date of death

4 April 1945

Cemetery

American War Cemetery Ardennes

Plot	Row	Grave
D	29	12

Immediate family

Members

Earl H. Hewitt (father)

Ethel Hewitt (mother)

Mary E. (Barker) Hewitt (sister)

Phyllis (Nipps) Hewitt (sister)

Plane data

Serial number

42-50664

Data

Type: B-24J

Destination: Perleberg, Germany

MACR: 13728

More information

2nd Lt Richard W. Hewitt attended Medford schools and played football while in high school. He graduated in 1940. Before entering the Army Dec. 26, 1941, he was employed by United States Forest Service in Medford. He received specialized training in various army schools and in October, 1944, went overseas for combat duty. Lt Hewitt was killed while on a bombing mission near Lüneburg, Germany. He was flying his 26th mission with the 445th Bomb Group of the Eighth Air Force.

From the MACR:

"The airplane was attacked by fighters. The plane was on fire and had lost its elevator. No chutes were observed. One crew states ship exploded."

Eyewitness statement from T/Sgt William Pitts.

This is the eve of my first week home and I have made 7 unsuccessful attempts to write to my crewmembers next of kin. But now that the excitement has calmed down, my handwriting has become a little more legible.

Sir, I'm not going to beat around the bush, cause I know you want the story as it really

was. Dick (Richard W. Hewitt) was my best friend on the crew, and we had big things planned when we finished our missions.

As you have probably heard from unofficial sources, I am the only crewmember alive, and I'm trying to let all the fellows families know just what happened on that frightful April 4 that 8:49 A.M. attack by a German ME-262. We were attacked by fighters just before our turn onto the bomb run. We were shot on our right wing, and our numbers 3 and 4 engines were blown off. I was standing between Lt. MacDonald and Dick when it happened, and the next thing I knew, we were falling and were turned over on our back. Lt. MacDonald was killed instantly, and Dick and I were trying to bail out the little top observation hatch that was by this time below us. Dick didn't have on his parachute, and was going to bail out with me. This is the first time I ever knew Dick to not have his chute on. We got half way out the hatch, and the door came closed. We were hanging by my left leg. We both struggled to get free, and finally we did. By this time we had fallen 15,000 feet. I waited to make sure that we were clear of the burning plane before I pulled the rip chord. Dick was on my back, and I had my left arm around him. I pulled the rip chord, and Sir, you'd better brace yourself, Dick fell off my back because the

shock was so great. Even my wrist watch and shoes were jerked off. Sir, it pains me deeply to have to tell you this, but I know you wouldn't want any other way. As you (something), Dick and I were the best of friends, and he wasn't like the other officers who wouldn't let you forget the fact. Well I landed with more pain in my heart than in my body. I was captured by some farmers about ten minutes later. Then there was a big explosion, and I knew the fire had set off the bombs. They took me to this little village about 1 mile away, and oddly enough, that is where the airplane crashed. When the bombs exploded, it blew hell out of the village. I was turned over to the local constable, and all this time I was expecting to see some of the crewmembers. The constable turned me over to the German Luftwaffe, and I was taken to Luneburg, 22 kilometers away. The little village had no name, but it was about 15 miles south west of Luneburg. I was put in solitary confinement and taken to the hospital in the morning for overnight. Next day I was questioned and told that all the men were burned but Dick and I. They showed me 3 men's dogtags, and Dick's wallet. I told them I was his friend, and could I please have his girl's picture. I am enclosing it in this letter. I started keeping track of the time on the back of her picture when I was in solitary. Next day I was sent to the Sulag Luft at Pinneburg 15 miles from Hamburg. There I was put in solitary for 7 more days and questioned again. Then I was transferred to Stalag Luft I at Barth, Germany between Lubeck

and Pomeranian bays. I was there just long enough to get out of the routine of prison life, when the Russians came and liberated us.

Sir, this is the toughest job I've ever had to do. I only wish I could have informed you in person. Please try overlook the one sided slant to the story, and also the poor hand-writing. If you ever come down this way please stop in and if you have any questions I may have failed to answer, please feel free to write

yours Sincerely,

Bill
Tech / Sgt. William G. Pitts

Photos



Source of information: Peter Schouteten, Larry Barker (nephew), www.wwiimemorial.com, www.archives.gov, www.ancestry.com - 1930/1940 Census / Minnesota Birth and Christenings Index / David Richardson Family Tree

Photo source: Peter Schouteten, Larry Barker (nephew), Danny van der Groen