

## Fields of Honor Memorial

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Fields of Honor  
Foundation



### Personal info

Full name

**HARMS, Herbert Wayne**

Date of birth

**4 October 1915**

Age

**28**

Place of birth

**LaSalle County, Illinois**

Hometown

**Rutland, LaSalle County, Illinois**

### Military service

Service number

**19073450**

Rank

**Staff Sergeant**

Unit

**569th Bombardment Squadron,  
390th Bombardment Group, Heavy**

Awards

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

### Death & Grave

Status

**Missing in Action**

Date of death

**16 August 1944**

Cemetery

**American War Cemetery Henri-Chapelle**

**Tablets of the Missing**

## Immediate family

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### Members

**Harm G. Harms (father)**

**Edna A. (Proctor) Harms (mother)**

**Elmer G. Harms (brother)**

**Willard P. Harms (brother)**

**Albert R. Harms (brother)**

**Edna L. Harms (sister)**

**Ralph P. Harms (brother)**

**Myra M. Harms (sister)**

**Wilma J. Harms (sister)**

**Walter D. Harms (brother)**

**George W. Harms (brother)**

**Leora J. Harms (sister)**

**Wahneta D Harms (sister)**

## Plane data

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### Serial number

**42-29962**

### Data

**Type: B-17F**

**Destination: Zeitz, Germany**

**Mission: Bombing of the oil refinery**

**MACR: 8455**

## More information

S/Sgt Herbert W. Harms attended college and was a miner.

He volunteered for the Air Corps of the Army of the United States at Santa Maria Army Air Field, California on 16 April 1942.

At about 1131 hours at about 21,000 feet, before bombs away near Zeitz (5104N-2180E), A/C 962, flying #6 position in the Lead Squadron, 390th C Group, peeled off to the right and out of formation and lost altitude after being hit by flak. Crews reported one to three parachutes were seen. One crew reported #1 engine was on fire. Other crews reported no fire or apparent distress observed. According to surviving crew members of this aircraft, the front section was on fire.

When last seen, A/C 962 was weaving to the left and right but apparently under control, at 18,000 feet about 1135 hours near 5100N-1155E. The plane exploded at a height of about 220 yards, 5 km west of Osterfeld. The crash resulted in a 100% destruction. Out of the wreckage, only the stabilizer could be safely identified. Only two parachutes were seen by the population and despite a careful search of the place of the crash no dead were to be found. It was supposed that the missing crew had already jumped and had landed in an eastward direction from the place of the crash. It is still remarkable that despite the explosion of the aircraft, bombs each weighing 90 pounds, had not exploded and were lying around the plane of the crash.

All crew members, except for S/Sgt Harms, survived and were taken prisoner.

It is not known what really happened with S/Sgt Harms. According to the navigator, 1st Lt John W. Stearns, S/Sgt Harms didn't bail out and must have been killed by flak in his position in the rear of the airplane. Otherwise, he would have bailed out, as he was known as a very cool person with good common sense. He already made one emergency jump earlier.

According to statements of German soldiers, there was enough of the tail section intact so that he would have been found had he rode the plane down.

This mission was already his 28th.

## Photos



