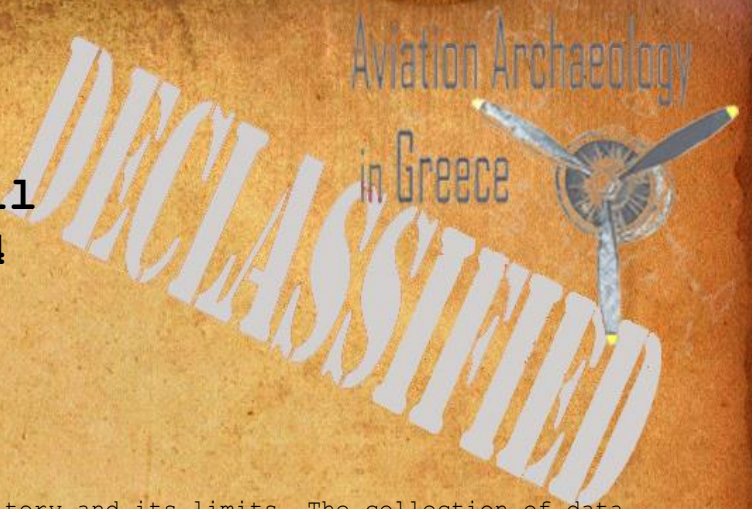


North American B-25 Mitchell
Losses in Greece 1943-1944

Research: Manolis Bardanis
info@naxosdiving.com

The list refers to medium bomber aircrafts type B-25 Mitchel which lost in the Greek territory and its limits. The collection of data was based mainly on documents from USAAF Missing Air Crew Reports (MACR). Wherever it was possible information cross checked with RAF, SAAF, Kriegsmarine and Luftwaffe archives. German ships, units, pilot names, etc., are also listed as well as little additional information from the internet and the literature mentioned below.

Perhaps the list is not complete and any new information that arises will be added to it.

Certainly some mistakes are inevitable and hopefully instructions and data from the reader will help to identify and correct.

Losses relating to aircrafts of the following units:

USAAF: 12thAF/57BW/310BG/379BS, 12thAF/57BW/321BG/445BS, 12thAF/57BW/321BG/447BS, 12thAF/57BW/340BG/486BS.

Acronyms & Abbreviations

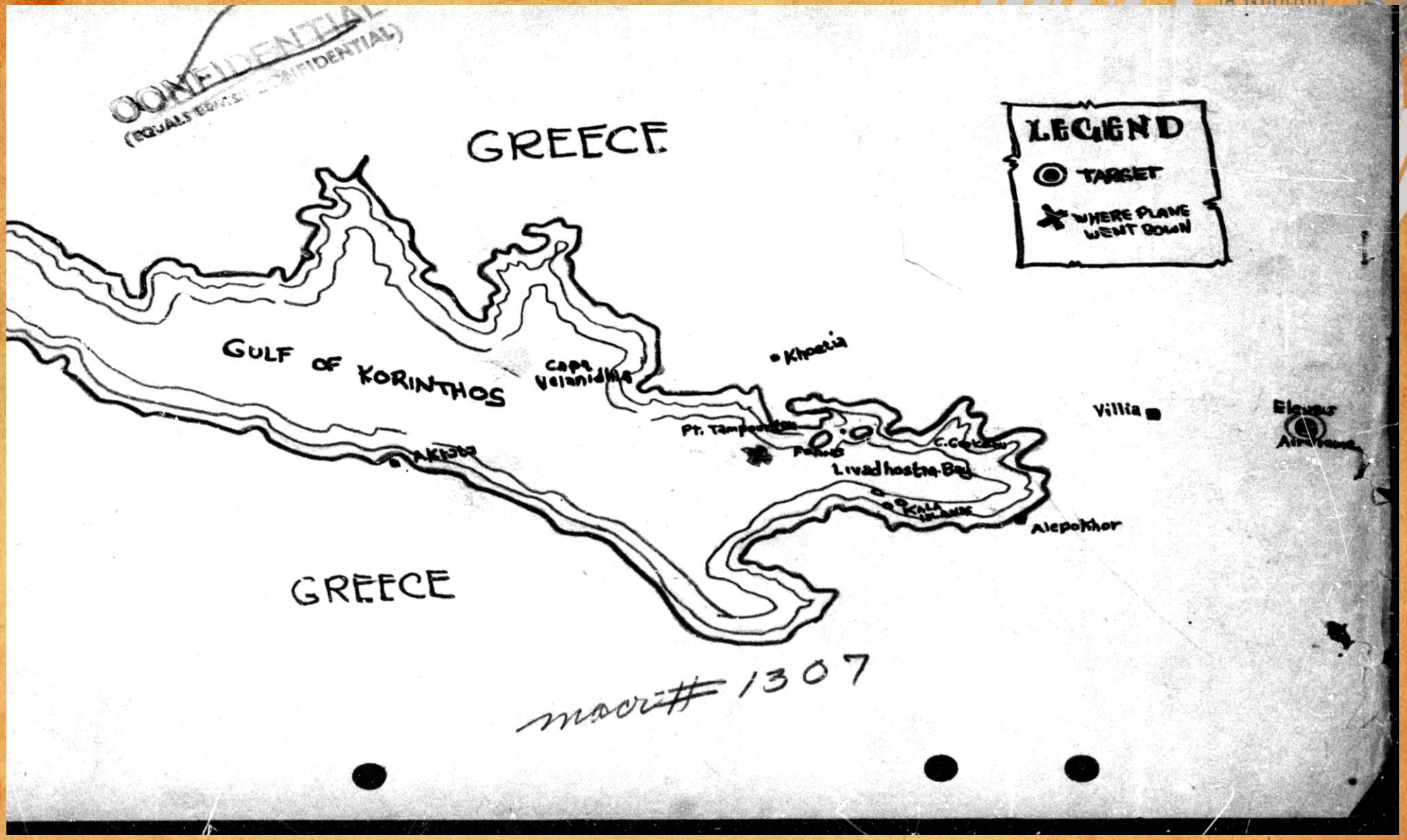
A/C Aircraft
AF Air Force
AFHRA Air Force Historical Research Agency
Bf-109 or ME-109 Aircraft type Messerschmitt
BG Bombardment Group
BS Bombardment Squadron
BW Bombardment Wing
Cpl Corporal
FG Fighter Group
FS Fighter Squadron
F/O Flight Officer
Fw Feldwebel
GA Griechenland Attika
Gefr. Gefreiter
Hptm. Hauptmann
JG Jagdeschwader
K.Kpt. Korvettenkapitän
KIA Killed In Action
Ltn. Lieutenant
1/Lt or Lt1 Lieutenant
2/Lt or Lt2 2nd Lieutenant
MACR Missing Air Crew Report
Mk Mark
NMI No Middle Initial
Ofw. Oberfeldwebel
ORB Operations Record Book
POW Prisoner of War
RAF Royal Air Force
SAAF South African Air Force
Sgt Sergeant
S/Sgt Staff Sergeant
Sqn Squadron
T/Sgt Technical Sergeant
UJ Unterseeboote Jäger
USAAF United States Army Air Force
W/O Warrant Officer

B-25C of the 340th BG/489th BS bombs striking the Eleusis airfield on 16th of November 1943.
Photo credits: T/Sgt. Minot M. (Johnny) Johnson 35385773. Combat photographer of 489th BS.

Listed by date

A/A	Date dd/mm/yy Time	Construction Number	Type Mark	Unit	CREW	History / Remarks /Location / Sources
			1943			
1	**08/10/43 13:45**	42-64590	B-25C	12th AF/ 57BW/321BG/ 445BS	2/Lt. Joel T. HARTMEISTER (Pilot) 0-792260 EVADED 2/Lt. Ernest A. FREY (Co-Pilot) 0-793404 EVADED S/Sgt. Thomas H. FLYNN (Bombardier) 31124434 EVADED S/Sgt. Joseph E. KERBOW (Engineer – Gunner) 18039576 KIA. Sgt. Phillip W. O'NEILL (Turret gunner) 14076598 KIA. T/Sgt. Warren D. WRIGHT (Radio operator – Gunner) 34283264 KIA. T/Sgt. Kenneth M. CHANEY (Photographer from 9th Combat Camera Unit) 17042414 EVADED	321 BG Mission #135. At 11:25 Forty-eight B-25s and twenty-four P-38s for escort took off from Grottaglie airdrome (Italy) for a bombing (combat) mission to Eleusis airdrome (Greece). After completion of bomb run, the ship was hit by flak and attacked by enemy fighters, damaged in one engine and forced to cut the formation and ditched in the sea in Gulf of Korinthos at the mouth of Livadhostra bay. The plane was on fire. Hartmeister, Frey, Flynn and Chaney bailed out and swim for nine hours, sighted a fishing boat and were picked up. On 23rd of November 1943, pilot Joel Hartmeister, co-pilot Ernest Frey, bombardier Thomas Flynn and photographer Kenneth Chaney reported safe in hands of guerrillas group in Karpenision. Shot down 20km. S. Leváhdia:3.500m. at 13:48 Luftwaffe A/C: Bf-109 Pilot: Major Gustav-Siegfried Rödel. Unit: Stab./JG 27 **MACR 1307,** **321st BG Squadrons War Diaries (AFHRA, IAW EO12958),** **BA-MA Film C. 2031/II Anerk: Nr.-**

Aviation Archaeology in Greece



42-64590 point of ditch.

Aviation Archaeology
Wrecks in Greece

2	**08/10/43 14:05**	**POOCHIE** 42-64675	B-25C	12th AF/ 57BW/321BG/ 445BS	1/Lt. James Buckner Jr. FISHER (Pilot) 0-659966 2/Lt. John Walter CARMINE (Co-pilot) 0-794527 2/Lt. Jack P. MAC LEOD (Bombardier) 0-731211 2/Lt. Hobart G. "Bart" OSBURN (Navigator) 0-669098 S/Sgt. Theodore C. KUNIS (Engineer – Gunner) 33069075 S/Sgt. Howard L. GARTHWAITE (Radio operator – Gunner) 32402780 Cpl. John (NMI) WORONUK (Turret gunner) 6486610 Captain Clarence H. "Pop" CORNING (Observer) 0-125382 (97FS, 82FG) All POW's in prison camp Stalag Luft I, Barth Germany. Repatriated to the USA in Jan 1945.	321 BG Mission #135. At 11:25 Forty-eight B-25s and twenty-four P-38s for escort took off from Grottaglie airdrome (Italy) for a bombing (combat) mission to Eleusis airdrome (Greece). After completion of bomb run, on the way to basis, the ship did a sharp turn of 180° and head back toward another B-25 (the previous on the list 42-64590) which was falling behind and quickly losing altitude after an attack by enemy fighters. Both of the planes attacked again by the enemy fighters. Damaged B-25 (42-64590) went into the water and 42-64675 pulled back up to rejoin formation. Right engine was feathered and was flying 150mph. Before reaching Cape Avia a fresh bunch of enemy fighters attacked the B-25. The plane began to lose altitude quickly and was forced to make a successful water landing 10 miles NW of town of Patrai (Gulf of Patrai) with the fighters still attacking until the plane stopped. Shot down 15 km. N. Araxos: 500 m. at 14:10 Luftwaffe A/C: Bf-109 Pilot: Ofw. Kurt Hoppe Unit: 8./JG 27 On 2005 a trawler fishing boat recovered on its nets the starboard engine of the B-25C from 100m depth in Gulf of Patrai (Panagopoulas area). On the inside of the cowling there is an inscription 1414 R but no dataplate. The engine is exhibited in Hellenic Air Force Museum. **MACR 927,** **MACR 1301,** **321st BG Squadrons War Diaries (AFHRA, IAW EO12958),** **BA-MA Film C. 2031/II Anerk; Nr. –**

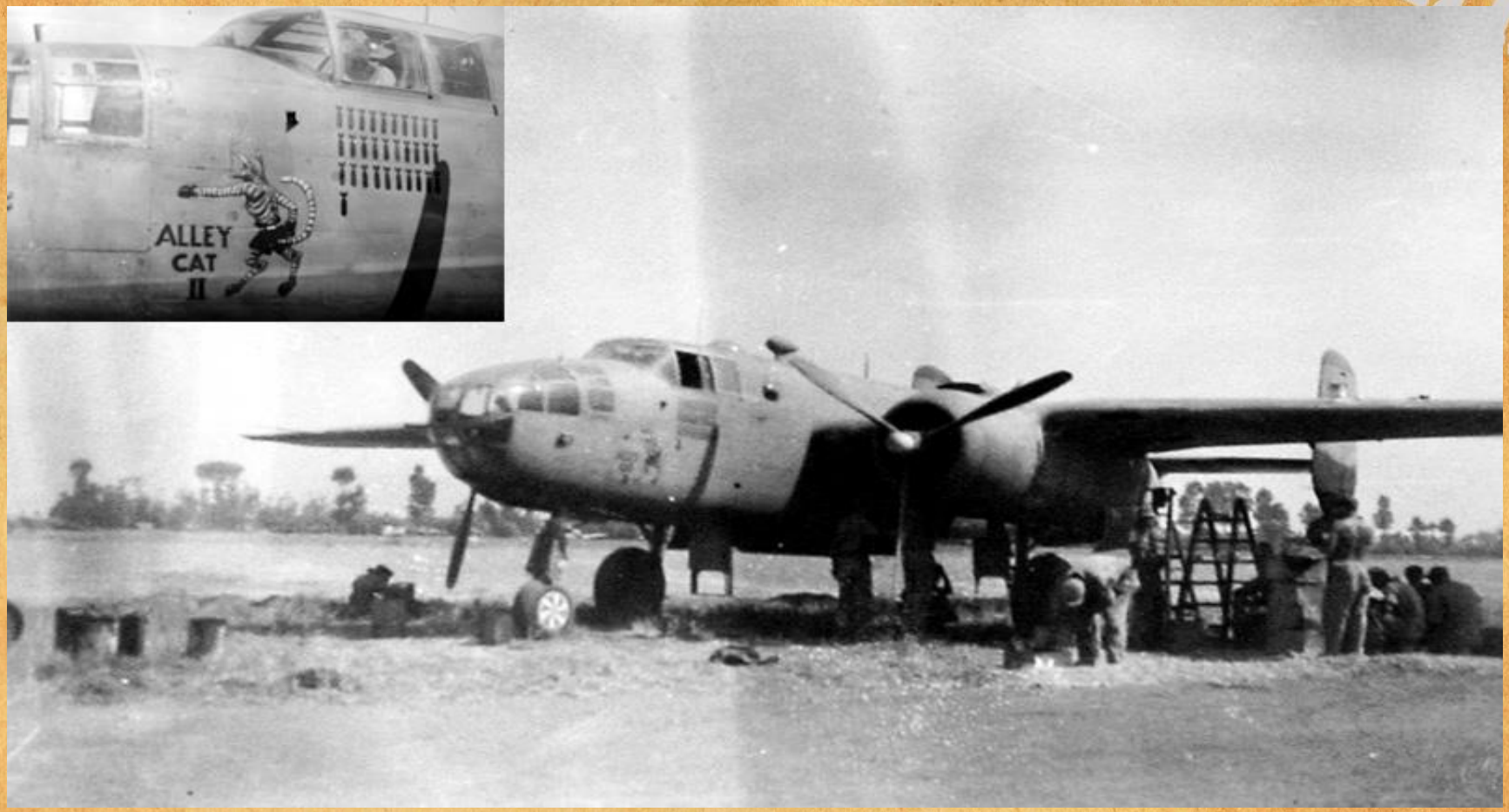
Aviation Archaeology in Greece

"POOCHIE" 42-64675 point of ditch.

Aviation Archaeology

3	26/10/43	**ALLEY CAT II** 42-53487	B-25C	12thAF/ 57BW/321BG/ 447BS	2/Lt. William T. BAXTER (Pilot) 2/Lt. Theodore G. JORDAN (Co-Pilot) 2/Lt. Graham K. MUIRHEAD (Bombardier) Evaded. Return to 447BS on 11 Feb. 1944 S/Sgt. Ralph J. H. GREGORY (Engineer - Gunner) Sgt. Harvey H. WAGNER (Gunner) Sgt. Ralph W. NEWHOUSE (Radio operator - Gunner) KIA Cpl. Robert D. LEON (Photographer) Return to 447BS on 13 Feb. 1944 28 Nov. 1943. A report received states that the crew being interned in Turkey. Sgt. Newhouse, (Engineer Gunner) was killed over the target. The others are safe. **447th BS War Diary**	321 BG Mission # 147 At 11:55 Thirty-six B-25s and thirty-two P-38s for escort took off from Grottaglie to bomb Salonika/Megalo Mikra and Salonika/Sedes Airdromes. As the plane completed its bomb run on the target it apparently was hit by flak, at about 13:40, in the right engine. The crews of several other planes in the same flight saw its right engine emitting a trail of black smoke shortly after it dropped its bombs. The plane followed the rest of the formation for about 120 degrees of the 180 degree right turn that the formation made off the target, during which turn it was observed to be losing altitude fairly rapidly. It failed to complete the full turn with the formation possibly because the turn was into its damaged engine. It straightened out and flew a straight course of about 200 degrees while the formation continued on a heading of about 270 degrees. At this time it was at about 7500 feet altitude some 2000 feet below the formation. By this time it's right motor had ceased smoking. Some observers state that the propeller was feathered. When last seen it was continuing to lose altitude rapidly although several observers state that it was holding its altitude. All agree that it was under control. Since its engines had well over 300 hours and had lost a great deal of their power it is the opinion of the pilot who usually flew the plane that it could not hold such an altitude on one engine and that it was doubtful whether it could maintain flying speed at any altitude. One observer states that he saw the plane turn south and then east to a point near the coast south of Epanomi Point where it was only about 500 feet off the water. At the time that it first left the formation the flight leader was advised of its condition and unsuccessfully attempted to contact it by radio. Its element leader also observed its plight and throttled back to

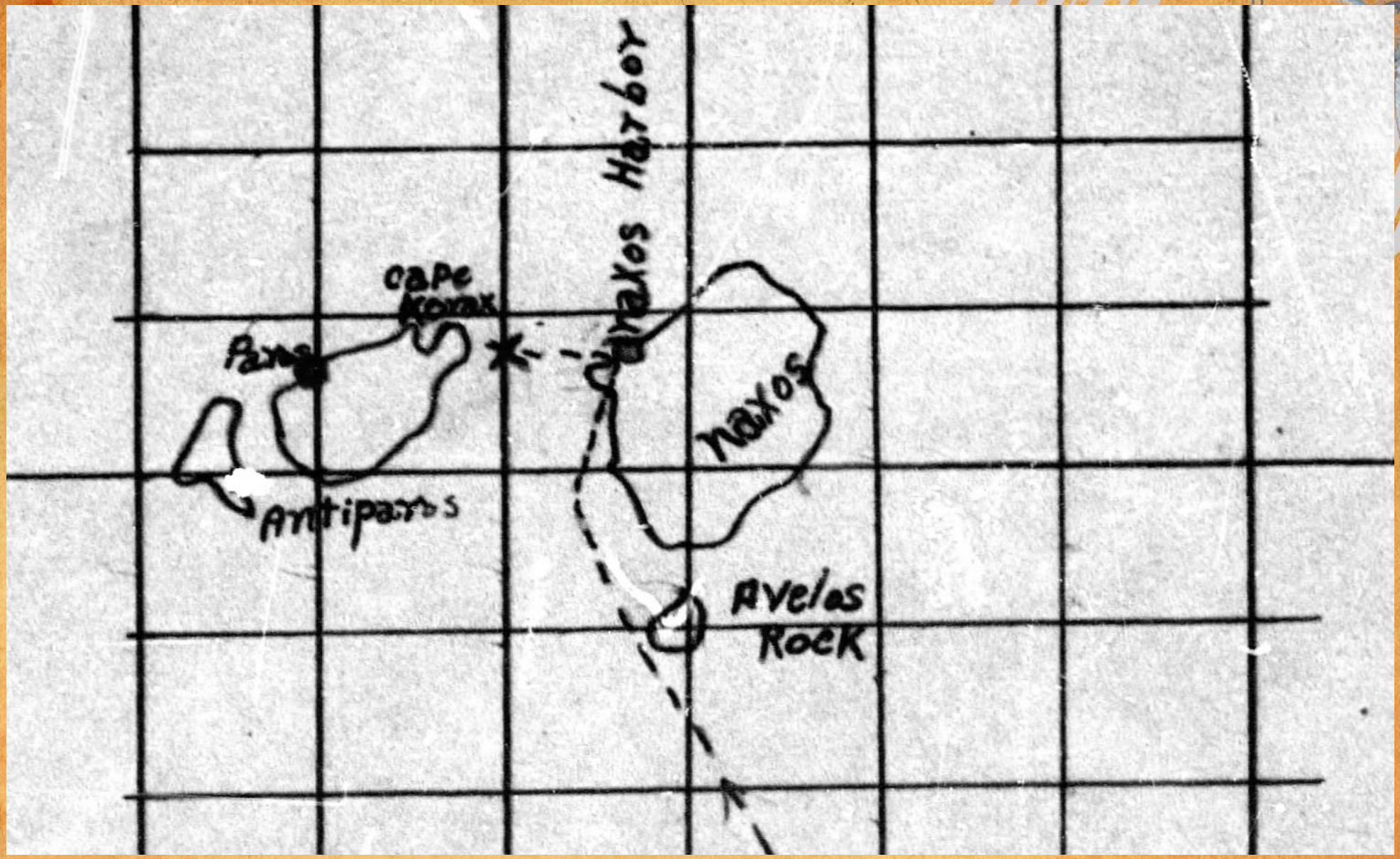
						give it a chance to rejoin the formation. However it was soon apparent that it could not or would not rejoin the formation when it continued on its 200 degree heading and the formation was compelled to leave it behind. **321st BG Squadrons War Diaries (AFHRA, IAW EO12958),**



447th Maintenance crew working on B-25 Alley Cat II. Top left, nose art. Photo credits pilot of 447BS Lt. Richard H. "Dick" Spingler

Aviation Archaeology

4	**30/10/43 15:55**	**FLYING CAISSON** 42-64579	B-25C-20 Converted to B-25G	12th AF/ 57BW/321BG/ 445BS/ Detachment Squadron "G"	2/Lt. Gordon J. BLACK (Pilot) 0742663 2/Lt. William GOLDEN (Co-Pilot) 0674485 S/Sgt. Felton E. HORTON (Gunner) 38224757 S/Sgt. Arthur W. LANG (Radio operator – Gunner) 31174614 S/Sgt. Edwin E. RAMSBURG (Engineer – Gunner) 15077105 (446BS) Sgt. Richard E. WENRICH (Bombardier) 33238203 All KIA. No one was seen leaving the aircraft at the time of the crash, nor was anyone seen when the other B-25G "Red Nose Beckie" and Beaufighter "L" did a visual sweep several minutes after the crash. The aircraft broke up on impact.	Detachment Squadron "G" Mission #18. Four aircraft, 2 B-25G's (Flying Caisson and Red nose Beckie) of 445BS and 446BS USAAF and 2 Beaufighters Mk.X (JM317/S and …./L) of 47Sqn. RAF, took off from Gambut #3 and El Adem at 13:50 – 13:47 for shipping strike mission in the harbour of Naxos island in the Aegean. At 15:50 the formation reached Naxos island and attacked the German ships GA01 and GA54 that were anchored in the harbour as well as the GA92 that was out of the port. The German ships GA01 and GA54 heavily damaged from attack but didn't sink. Their crews acted fast and fire back at the time that the a/c's turned off the target run and started to break for safety. Then they encountered a great deal of medium and heavy flak. Beaufighter JM317/S get damaged in one of the engines and forced to ditched 8 miles North-east of the harbour (near Abraam bay) and B-25G "Flying Caisson" crashed in the sea 2 miles west of the port in position 37°08'N, 25°20'E. Possibly pilots get killed in the cockpit because both engines were last seen functioning perfect till the aircraft hit the water. Losses on German ships: On GA01 3 men killed, 6 wounded. Within them German commander K.Kpt. Adolf Brune. On GA54 3 men killed and 4 wounded. On GA92 1 man wounded. Two Naxian inhabitants killed accidentally in that operation, Nikiforos Legakis and Dimitris Valvis. The last decade there were several expeditions and researches to locate the wreck, with no results. Although there are some information from local people that after the WWII (1950), the wreck of B-25G tangled in trawler fishing nets lifted up and sold for scrap. **MACR 1137, 47 Squadron RAF ORBs, 321st BG Squadrons War Diaries (AFHRA, IAW EO12958), Kriegstagebuch der 12 Küstenschutzflottille Attika.**

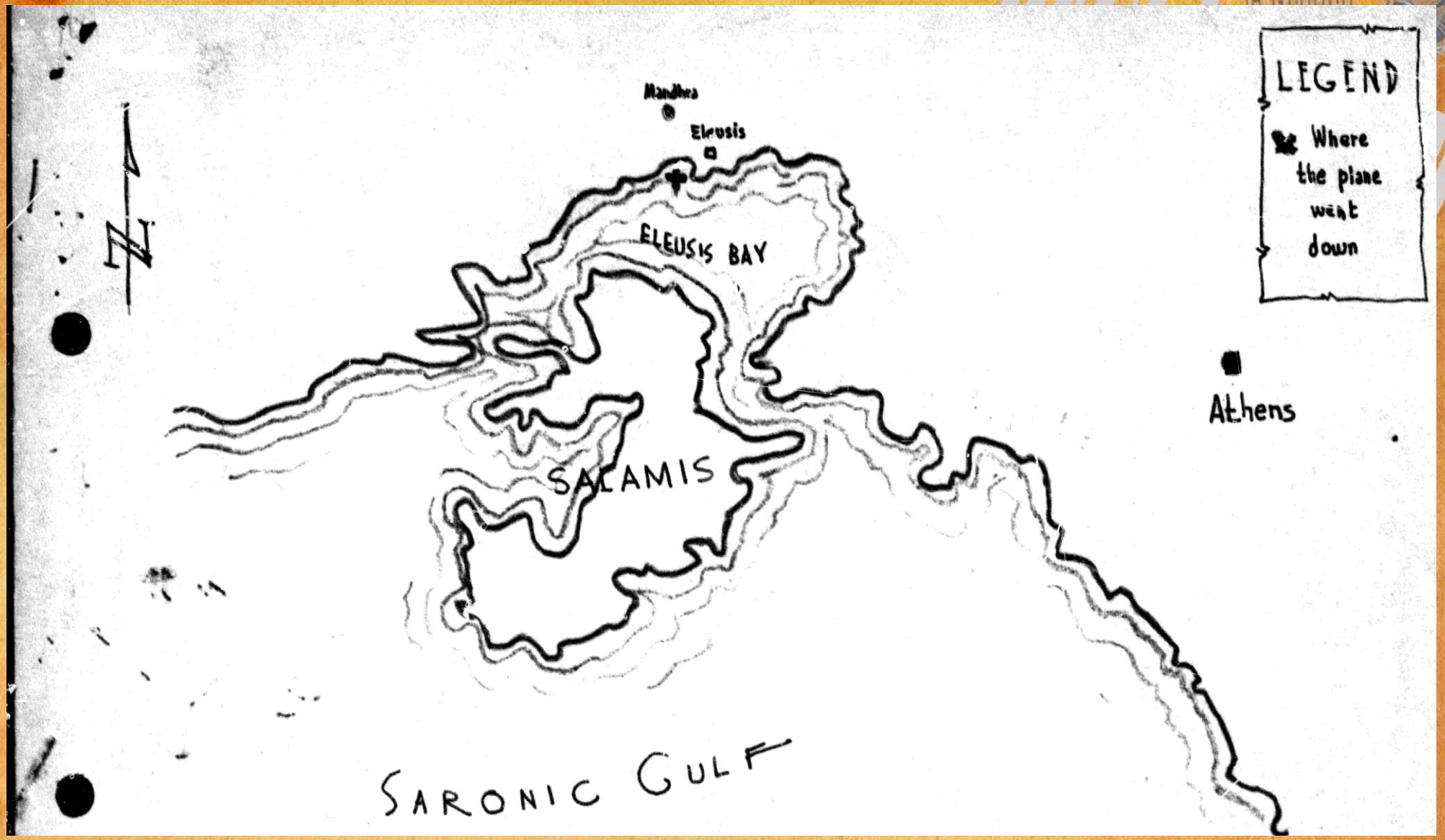


"Flying Caisson" 42-64579 point of crash

Aviation Archaeology
Wrecks in Greece

5	**03/11/43 08:05**	42-32486	B-25C	12th AF/ 57BW/321BG/ 445BS	2/Lt. Gail G. MILLER (Pilot) 0-666786 2/Lt. Charles A. STANDLEY (Co-pilot) 0-674529 Cpl Paul E. ZIMMER (Bombardier) 12044996 S/Sgt. Stanley J. QUINTIN (Turret Gunner) 31115280 T/Sgt. Robert A. FEHR (Radio Gunner) 36147041 T/Sgt. Andrew J. CHOKA (Tail Gunner) 35134427 One parachute was seen to open but all 6 KIA.	321 BG Mission #150. At 06:00 Forty-eight B-25s with fifty-two P-38s for escort took off from Grottaglie airdrome (Italy) for combat (bombing) mission to Eleusis airdrome and dispersal areas of Athens (Greece). When the planes arrived at the target, the field was closed due to weather. The planes then went on to a second target. Araxos Airdrome in Greece was bombed. The mission was definitely out of the milk-run class. Just outside the Athens area eight or nine Me-109 fighters attacked the formation in a hit-and-run manner. The fighters came up from below and took full advantage of nearby clouds as cover for their attack. A/c 42-32486 received hit, believed by flak on the right vertical stabilizer of the tail assembly before the town of Eleusis, enroute to the target. The plane slid out of formation to the left and back to the rear where it rolled over and began to spin to the ground. The right rudder and horizontal stabilizer were shot away and the turret dome blown off. Both of the engines were in operation and the plane spinned down slowly, remaining in an almost flat position. The plane was seen to hit the water and exploded in the Eleusis Bay, approximately one half mile from the shore, west of Eleusis, Greece. Another B-25 (42-64546) "Jessie James" also heavily damaged from german Me-109s but succeeded to return safely back to base. The same date at 08:05 (same time) there is a claim of a B-26 Marauder by Ltn. Hans-Gunnar Culemann Stab III./JG27 SW Eleusis: 4.000 m. (W. Athens). There is no loss of a Marauder on that date, so it might be the B-25C 42-32486. **MACR 1198,** **321st BG Squadrons War Diaries (AFHRA, IAW EO12958),** **BA-MA Film C. 2031/II Anerk: Nr.41**

Aviation Archaeology in Greece



42-32486 point of crash

Aviation Archaeology
Diving in Greece

6	**17/11/43 12:54**	42-64540	B-25C	12th AF/ 57BW/340BG/ 486BS	2/Lt. John D. O'LEARY (Pilot) 0-798022 EVADED. Helped by Greeks. 2/Lt. John E. SMITH (Co-pilot) 0-742791 POW. In German prison Hospital. 2/Lt. Daniel R. DUSZKIEWICZ (Bombardier - Navigator) 0-669020 KIA. Buried in Koropi town cemetery. S/Sgt. John P. SWEENEY (Radio operator - Gunner) 32396880 KIA. Buried in Koropi town cemetery. Sgt. Roderick M. MAC DOUGALL (Armorer - Gunner) 31031000 KIA. Buried in Koropi town cemetery. S/Sgt. Frank E. WILLIAMS (Tail Gunner) 33264947 KIA. Buried in Koropi town cemetery.	340 BG Mission #192. Seventy-two B-25s, Thirty-six planes from 340 BG and Thirty-six from 321 BG, with P-38s for escort, took off at 10:10-10:32 from San Pancratzio airdrome (Italy) for combat mission to Athens - Kalamaki airdrome (Greece). At 12:55 planes were over the target. When bomb run was completed and turning off target the ship received the first 88mm flak hit in the rear section of the bomb bay. At the same time a German a/c Me-109 appeared from the sun and another one reported attacking from opposite direction. Traces from both Me109's set up a cross fire which poured through the right wing. Flak bracketing from both sides hit both engines. The B-25 started spinning. Pilot and Co-Pilot bailed out but no one else. The ship crashed in the mountains approximately 45 miles south and east of Athens, just outside the town of Koropi. To lost a bomber over the target in the daytime to enemy fighter opposition it was the first time happened in the combat history of 340th Bombardment Group. A/C shoted down by one of the following German pilots or a combination of them: Ltn. **Wolfgang Hohls** 11./JG 27 W. Krapias: 4.000 m. 12.49 Fw. **Heinrich Bartels** 11./JG 27 N.E. Kalamáki: 4.000 m. 12.50 Fw. **Heinrich Bartels** 11./JG 27 N.E. Kalamáki: 4.000 m. 12.52 Hptm. **Joachim Kirschner** Stab IV./JG 27 W. Insel Disporia: 3.900 m. 13.03 Ltn. **Hans-Gunnar Culemann** Stab III./JG 27 südlich Athen 12.50 **MACR 1826, 340th BG Squadrons War Diaries (AFHRA, IAW EO12958),** **BA-MA Film C. 2031/II Anerk: Nr.-** **Reference: JG 27 Lists f. 347**

Aviation Archaeology in Greece

1944

1	**01/02/44 12:57**	42-64840	B-25G	12th AF/ 57BW/310BG/ 379BS	2/Lt. James F. "Jimmy" LAVENDER (Pilot) 0-740841 2/Lt. Warren G. STALEY (Co-pilot) 0-747915 2/Lt. Edwin A. SMITH (Bombardier – Navigator) 0-741762 Sgt. John V. GAROFALO (Bombardier – Gunner) 32557629 S/Sgt. Neil S. JOHNSON (Gunner) 15324259 Cpl. Samuel P. RUSSELL (Tail gunner) 16109060 All KIA. It is believed that the crew survived the landing and used the dinghy, however, no trace of the six crew members was ever found, and one year later, the Government made a Finding Of Death for each of the six crew members.	379 BS Mission #217 Four B-25's took off from Gambut (Libya) for a combat mission around Leros island. West side of Leros, approximately two miles off shore Portolago Bay sighted a 3000 tons Merchant Vessel and two escorting Corvettes. After attacking a three ship convoy the a/c was hit on the left wing about in the middle. There was a gap in that wing about a foot wide and 9 inches deep from which a piece of cable was dangling. Believed to have hit a rocket cable fired by vessel it attacked. The left engine started to throw oil. The plane was unable to hold altitude and settled into the sea. Was seen to make a controlled and successful ditching SSW off Lakki bay, Leros, in position 37°05'N, 26°48'E. More information about this operation can be read on the following a/c of the list. **MACR 2814,** **310th BG Squadrons War Diaries (AFHRA, IAW EO12958),** **Kriegstagebuch der 9. Torpedobootflottille,** **Kriegstagebuch des Kommandanten der Seeverteidigung des Dodekanes**

Aviation Archaeology in Greece
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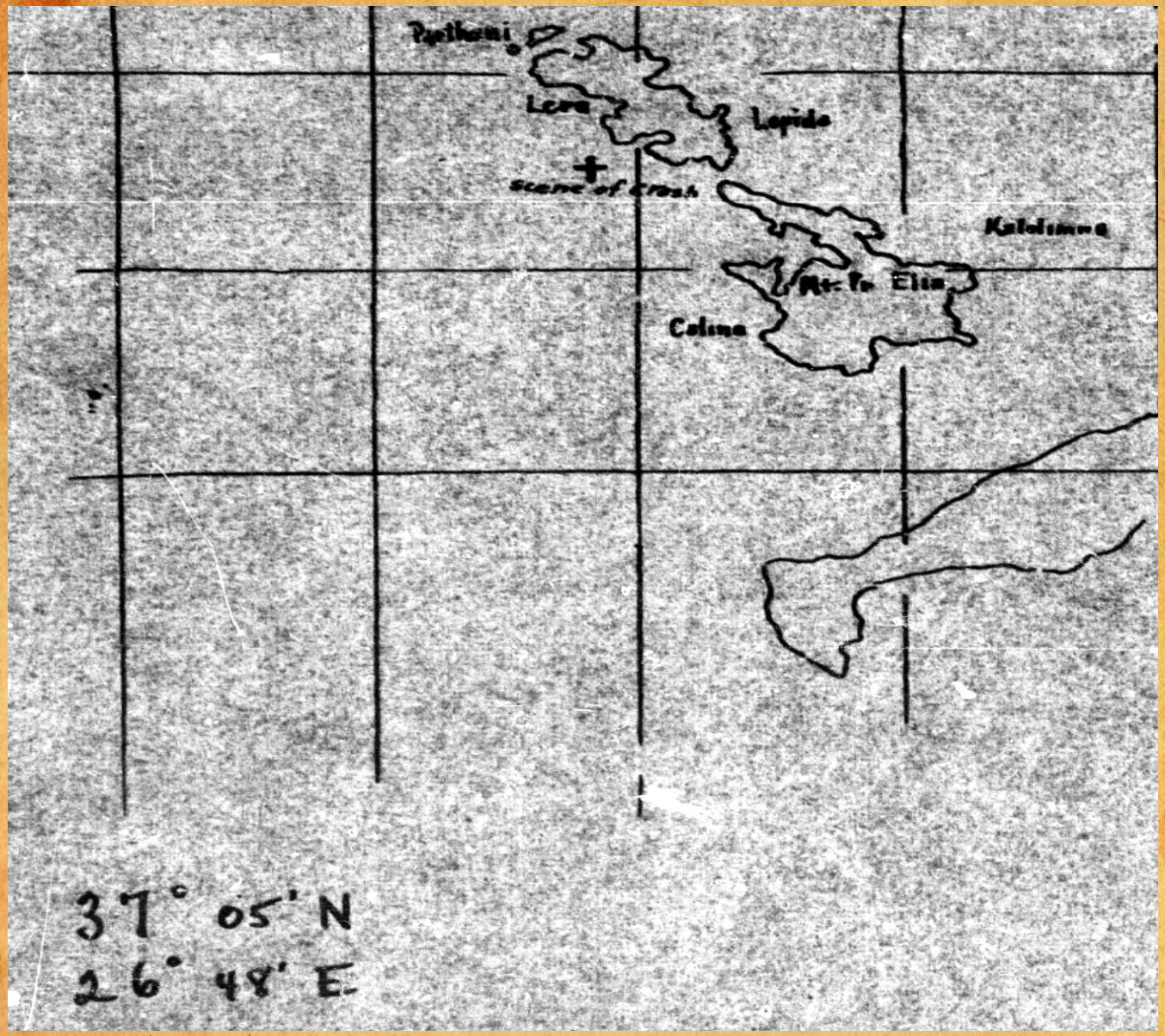

42-64840 point of ditch

Aviation Archaeology in Greece

2	**01/02/44 12:57**	42-64770	B-25G	12th AF/ 57BW/310BG/ 379BS	2/Lt. Edmund N. SLATER (Pilot) 0-674955 2/Lt. Gustave HUTTEMANN (Co-pilot) 0-795748 2/Lt. Dudley P. THORNE (Bombardier – Navigator) 0-741769 S/Sgt. Deane E. PYLES (Radio operator – Gunner) 15322848 S/Sgt. Walter J. MAC CONNELL (Gunner) 12030923 S/Sgt. Todd (NMI) BARNEYCASTLE (T Gunner) 18117439 All KIA.	379 BS Mission #217 Four B-25's took off from Gambut (Libya) for a combat mission around Leros island. West side of Leros, approximately two miles off shore Portolago Bay sighted a 3000 tons Merchant Vessel and two escorting Corvettes. Made an attack. A/c was hit by flak on crossing ships before going over the Merchant Vessel. When last seen it was burning at either left engine or gas tank. It crashed heavily into the sea about 30 seconds later, nose down at about a 25 degree angle. Exploded on impact. SSW off Lakki bay, Leros, in position 37°05'N, 26°48'E. On German documents the same day in vicinity of Leros there were 3 attacks from allied forces aircrafts reported at approximately the same time. The first 2 were made from the formation of B-25's of 379 BS USAAF and the 3rd from six Marauders B-26 of 24 Sqn. SAAF instead of six Mitchells that Germans mistakenly reported. 01.02.44 At 11:30 (12:30 British time) Four enemy a/c's type Mitchell attacked and sank a small 8 tons oil tanker in Alinda bay (east Leros). One of the enemy aircrafts shoted down by anti-aircraft fire from "Mars" batterie. A second aircraft seen in smoke when breaking away. 01.02.44 At 11:35 (12:35 British time) Four a/c's attacked on submarine chasser ships UJ 2124, UJ 2151 and UJ 2153 west of Leros. The UJ 2124 (former Greek steam yacht ELLAKI) 108 BRT was hit hard and sank after the boiler exploded. Survivors collected from UJ 2151 and UJ 2153 and transported to Porto Lago (Port Lakki, Leros). Losses: 3 men dead, 4 heavily injured and 3 light wounded. 01.02.44 At 12.25 (13:25 British time) Six

						a/c's type Mitchell attacked on M/V LEDA (former Italian LEOPARDI) 4572 BRT. Some of the bombs fell into the sea and some on land without causing any damage. It is possible that the final shot on one of the two B-25's was given by 7./JG27 pilot Gefr. Gerhard Siegling who was credited with the destruction of one B-25 west of Calino (Kalymnos) on 1st of February 1944 at 12:30 On 2011 a trawler fishing boat recovered on its nets a piece of a wing (8,5m length) of a B-25 Mitchell from 230m depth. The position of recovery was SSW on the route from Lakki (Leros) to Astypalaia island. The wing is dropped in shallow water close to the shore off Leros. Some small pieces of the a/c are exhibited in War Material Museum (Leros). **MACR 2815,** **310 BG Squadrons War Diaries (AFHRA, IAW EO12958),** **Kriegstagebuch der 9. Torpedobootflottille,** **Kriegstagebuch des Kommandanten der Seeverteidigung des Dodekanes.** **24 Sqn. SAAF War Diaries - Sortie reports** **BA-MA Film C. 2025/II Anerk: Nr.2** **Deposito Di Guerra / War Material Museum (Leros)**

Aviation Archaeology in Greece
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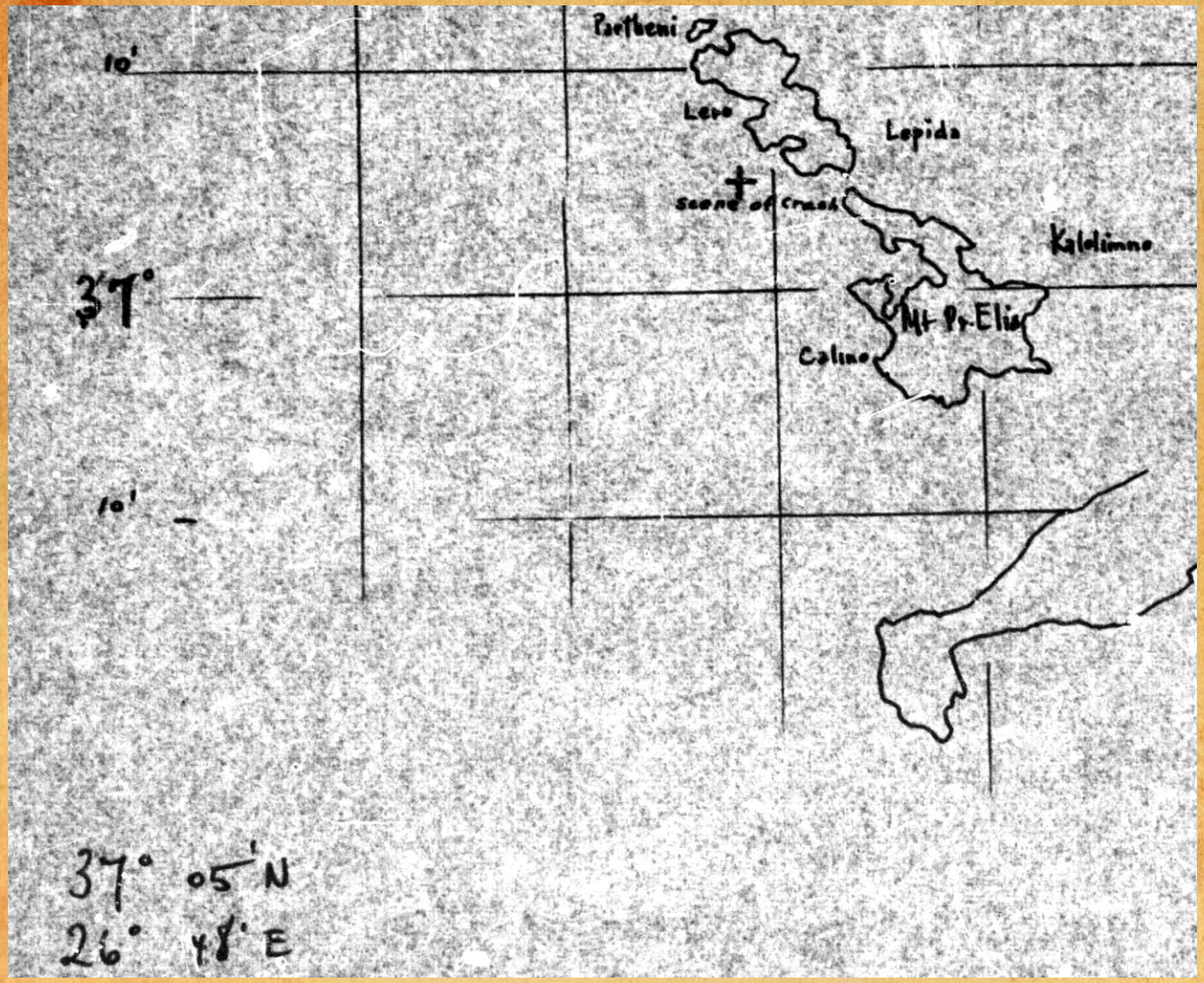

42-64770 point of crash

SOURCES:

MACR's: 927, 1137, 1198, 1301, 1307, 1826, 2814, 2815.

310st BG. Squadrons War Diaries. (AFHRA, IAW EO12958)
321st BG. Squadrons War Diaries. (AFHRA, IAW EO12958)
340st BG. Squadrons War Diaries. (AFHRA, IAW EO12958)

47 Sqn. RAF ORBs (AIR 27/464)

24 Sqn. SAAF War Diaries - Sortie reports (AIR 54/72)

Dimitris Galon archives:
Kriegstagebuch Küstenschutzflottille Attika
Kriegstagebuch 9. Torpedobootflottille.
Kriegstagebuch des Kommandanten der Seeverteidigung des Dodekanes

BA-MA 35-mm. micro-films O.K.L. Fighter Claims. Chef für Ausz. und Dizsiplin Luftwaffen-Personalamt L.P. (A) V Films & Supplementary Claims from Lists Mediterranean & Southern Front 1943

Deposito Di Guerra - War Material Museum (Ioannis Paraponiaris. Ag. Irini – Lakki Lerou, Leros Greece)

https://patraikosgulf.wordpress.com
http://www.historisches-marinearchiv.de/
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http://www.gattara.it/
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