

WARPATH ACROSS THE PACIFIC

**THE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE
345th BOMBARDMENT GROUP
DURING WORLD WAR II**

SECOND EDITION (REVISED)



LAWRENCE J. HICKEY

**MAPS AND COLOR ARTWORK BY
STEVE W. FERGUSON**

**INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND PUBLISHING CORPORATION
BOULDER, COLORADO**

was found on April 21st, floating in the water a few miles from the crash site near the coastal town of Tung Shan. His identification and remains were eventually turned over to American authorities.

Another body washed ashore on the beach at the village of Ku-Lei and was buried nearby and forgotten. In February of 1946, one of the villagers noticed a small boy playing with a dog tag about a hundred yards from where the body had washed ashore ten months earlier. Investigating further, he found it carried the name Albin V. Johnson. Since a reward of \$100,000 Chinese Nationalist Dollars was being offered for information leading to the discovery of missing American personnel or war dead, the incident quickly came to the attention of local authorities. The body was exhumed and taken to Tung Shan where it was later turned over to an American recovery team.

ATTACK ON CHOMOSUI AIRDROME: APRIL 8, 1945

After standing down for a day 25 strafers flew to the Swatow area on April 8th to look for another convoy. The weather was bad in the area so the planes moved on to the Pescadores to see if there were any targets in the harbor at Mako. Again drawing a blank, the Air Apaches headed for the tertiary target, Chomosui Airdrome in the Southern Pescadores.

The 500-pound bombs were hardly suitable for an airfield attack and many of the crews were a bit shaken as the bombs bounced along the runways and exploded uncomfortably close behind the B-25s. The shower of heavy explosives damaged only one Jap fighter, but barracks, administration buildings, hangars and the runway took a pounding. The 500th Squadron was badly shot up again. Lt. Sam Bennett brought back a dead navigator, 2/Lt. Walter V. Wicker, who was hit in the shoulder by a piece of shrapnel which penetrated the floor of his compartment. Wicker bled to death before the plane reached base.

F/O Van Scoyk had another close call when BLOODY BARON, a plane borrowed from the 499th Squadron, was hit in the tail by a shell from a five-inch Naval gun which was firing from the shore. The plane was flying at low level on the extreme right of the Squadron formation and immediately began to sink. With the plane nosing over and shaking violently, Van Scoyk radioed "One-seven-seven going down." His co-pilot, 2/Lt. Louis L. Payton, a big man well over six feet tall, pulled back on the control column with all his strength and the plane shot straight up, just clearing the ground. It took both men pushing the control column with their feet to bring the nose down again.

The tail gunner, who was slightly wounded, informed Van Scoyk that the shell had put a gash a foot deep and two feet wide in the leading edge of the right vertical stabilizer. Numerous control cables were jammed or severed and the fuselage was holed in 34 places. The gunner was afraid that the entire tail section might fall off. With great difficulty, Van Scoyk and Payton wrestled the controls as the plane flew homeward, maneuvering it between 100 and 600 feet. On the long trip home, Lt. Harry Chused, the Jewish navigator, offered prayers in Yiddish.

"Dumbo" was notified to stand by, but the plane held

together and Van Scoyk landed BLOODY BARON in a rice paddy alongside the pot-holed emergency strip at Laoag. Van Scoyk thought the plane would be a write-off, but it eventually returned to service after major repairs.

ROUTINE MISSIONS: APRIL 11-27, 1945

The Air Apaches stood down for two days, then got turned back by weather from a search for shipping along the Indochina coast on the 11th. A dozen planes from the 498th and 499th bombed the jungle near Tignuan Village on the east coast of Luzon on the 12th. It was a routine mission but scouts who entered the area later reported the destruction of three trucks, fuel and ammunition dumps, and evidence of considerable enemy casualties as a result of the strike.

Tuguegarao Airdrome, a Jap staging base on Northern Luzon, felt the wrath of the strafers warpath on the 13th and 15th. A sweep of the Canton River from the city of Canton to its mouth was sandwiched in between on the 14th. Fuel dumps and barracks were the primary victims on the airfield, while a river boat, several luggers and a number of barges were destroyed or damaged on the sweep of the river.

The strafers tried to attack Lamsepo Airdrome in Northern Formosa on the 15th but couldn't break through bad weather off the southern tip of the island. On the way home the planes blasted the airdrome and town of Tuguegarao despite rain and poor visibility.

Twenty-six B-25s made it to Lamsepo on the 16th, hoping to take some of the pressure off the American task force engaged in supporting the Okinawa campaign. The headquarters buildings, dispersals and several parked aircraft were bombed, but returning crews reported that many of the Jap planes were dummies. Several B-25s were holed by AA and machine-gun fire and the 499th lost a navigator, 2/Lt. Allen H. Barnas, who bled to death on the way home after being hit by shrapnel.

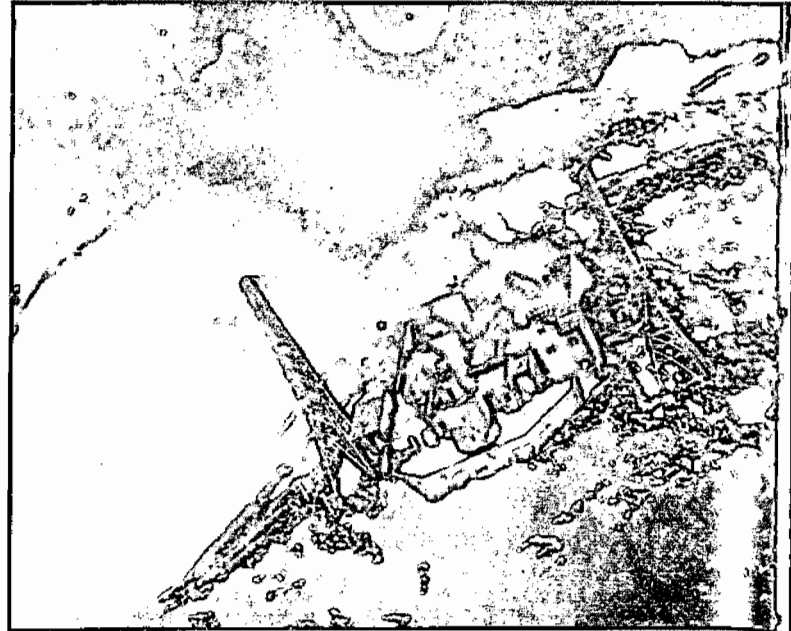
Both coasts of Formosa were searched for shipping on the 18th. Neither the 498th nor the 501st found any significant targets so they moved inland and struck railroad marshalling yards at Shoka and Karenko, inflicting heavy damage. During the 498th strike on Shoka, shots from a flak car near a railroad bridge knocked out the right engine and hydraulics on Lt. Ranger's plane. He made a successful wheels-up crash-landing at Laoag after flying for 90 minutes on a single engine.

The 498th lost one of its veteran officers as the result of a training accident on April 18th. Capt. Elmo L. Cranford was checking out one of the co-pilots as a first pilot when a bomb they had just dropped from TOOFIE'S TAXI exploded prematurely upon impact as they passed over the target at low level. Cranford was badly injured by a piece of shrapnel which came up through the bottom of the plane. Doctors worked through the night to save him but he died the next morning. The aircraft was written off due to a hole through the main spar in one of the wings.

During the next eight days, the planes flew several ground support missions for American troops battling their way through Japanese defenses on Northern Luzon.



This 1000-ton freighter was attacked near Fusan, Korea, on August 9th by 1/Lt. Heath C. Steele, 1/Lt. Wendell L. Opdycke and 2/Lt. Elliott S. Phillips of the 501st Squadron. On his second pass, Lt. Opdycke blew the stern completely away, leaving the superstructure collapsing backwards over the void. As the planes departed the area, the ship was sinking rapidly. (William R. Witherell, Jr., Collection)



On August 9th, three aircraft from the 500th Squadron attacked this radar and radio station atop the rocky bluffs at Danjo Gunto, a small island at the south end of the Tsu Shima Straits. The radar screen, not visible in this photo, was reported destroyed and two rockets damaged one of the radio towers. Two aircraft were damaged by flak. (Victor W. Tatelman Collection)

Just after five in the afternoon, a Mariner flying boat and three escorting B-25s reached the area, and in less than an hour all five men, including the two stretcher cases, had been transferred to the Mariner via the downed B-25's life raft. The flying boat took Kent and his crew directly to the hospital ship *S.S. Pine Island* at Okinawa.

SHIPPING SWEEPS CONTINUE: AUGUST 9, 1945

Nineteen planes set off to search the strait again the next morning. At first light, a Japanese fighter made two passes at a 501st aircraft, but 1/Lt. Heath C. Steele, the Squadron Leader, shook him off by pulling into some clouds. The individual aircraft joined up at the rendezvous point a short time later and began a Squadron sweep that sank a 1000-ton freighter and two smaller transports. The 499th put a rocket cleanly through the side of a small coastal freighter and blew one apart with a 500-pounder. Several luggers and small fishing craft were also destroyed or damaged as the aircraft searched the small inlets and islands along the strait and the southern end of the Sea of Japan.

The three aircraft from the 500th Squadron had a late take-off and struck the radar and radio station at Danjo Gunto, a small island at the southern entrance to the strait. A radar screen was destroyed and rockets scored direct hits on one of two radio towers. Return fire damaged two of the aircraft, knocking out the hydraulics on one, which subsequently crash-landed back at base.

While the Air Apaches were busy wreaking havoc in Tsu Shima Strait, a B-29 dropped the second atomic bomb on nearby Nagasaki, located on the west coast of Kyushu only a short distance from where the B-25s were ship hunting. Cloud formations in the area prevented the 345th's airmen from noticing the mushroom of smoke and debris which

boiled 60,000 feet over the city.

The second bit of good news that day was that Russia had finally entered the war, invading Manchuria with 1.6 million men during the early morning hours. Japan was now isolated, totally alone and facing annihilation.

SEARCH OF THE SEA OF JAPAN: AUGUST 10, 1945

Tsu Shima Strait and the Sea of Japan off Southern Honshu were the search zones again on the 10th. Planes from the 498th blew the bow off a large freighter, probably the 3111-ton *Chichibu Maru*, which became a burning inferno from six bomb hits before sinking. 1/Lt. Walter L. Treadwell and Lt. Stanley J. Trohimovich were given credit for the sinking. Direct hits in other attacks on two luggers sent debris and lumber flying a hundred feet into the air.

The 499th crews could locate only one small freighter in the haze, which they promptly sank with two well-placed bombs. The 500th got two more small vessels and a lugger and damaged several others in their ten-plane sweep.

The 501st Squadron, searching with nine planes, spotted a small 150-ton freighter and 2/Lt. Donald J. Britton was dispatched to sink it. This was his second success in recent days. Capt. George B. Foy, the Squadron Operations Officer, after pressing a fruitless search northward into the Sea of Japan, turned the squadron back towards Tsu Shima where he ordered the formation to break into three-plane flights and hunt for targets of opportunity.

Foy led his two wingmen down the northern island's west coast where they attacked the town of Shishimi with bombs and machine-gun fire. They then sped further south to hit another small town. The flight winged across the narrow strait separating the twin islands as Foy searched for a target for his two remaining bombs. Suddenly, he spotted what appeared to be a heavily-camouflaged destroyer anchored along

The crews flying many of the aircraft had little night flying experience, however, resulting in a series of fatal accidents.

The first of these took place on August 8th, when 2/Lt. Frank A. Kovach of the 499th Squadron began his take-off run into the early morning darkness. His plane apparently ran into turbulence from the prop wash of the plane ahead of him and began drifting sideways. The plane failed to gain enough speed to get airborne and crashed over the cliff at the end of the runway, exploding in flames. Only the badly injured co-pilot was pulled from the wreckage alive.

Despite the accident, a total of 31 planes arrived off Korea at first light, and the 499th and 500th caught a corvette under a full head of steam racing for safety in Tsu Shima Harbor. As the planes made repeated passes, the violently maneuvering ship fought back valiantly, damaging several aircraft, despite being severely damaged itself from at least one direct hit and several near misses. Intelligence later decided that the vessel had probably sunk.

Several other small freighters were damaged or sunk during the morning, and the 501st reported the destruction of a 1500-ton freighter which broke in two and sank after 1/Lt. Robert F. Jones scored a direct hit. Nine aircraft were damaged by defending AA fire during the attacks.

DOWN OFF THE KYUSHU COAST: AUGUST 8, 1945

As the raiders departed for home, one 500th Squadron aircraft was in trouble. 1/Lt. Paul E. Kent had made a run on a small ship anchored along the Korean coast just after sunrise, sinking it with 500-pound bombs. But flak from a nearby gunboat had damaged the rear fuselage, tail and most importantly, the right engine. Kent, who was unknowingly suffering a severe case of yellow jaundice, couldn't get the plane back to a thousand feet for the trip home.

As the plane flew southward over the next half hour, the temperature in the engine climbed as the oil drained away. Kent headed for a pre-designated rescue point and began circling over the sea several miles west of the Kyushu coast while his radio operator, Cpl. Marshall Gorham, tried to raise someone on the rescue channel. A submarine was supposed to be on lifeguard duty somewhere in the area but he couldn't raise it. The generator powering the radio had apparently gone dead.

Ten miles away, the watch on the submarine *U.S.S. Pomfret* saw the B-25 begin to circle. As Kent searched for the next 15 minutes, the *Pomfret* tried vainly to raise him on the VHF band. At one point the plane headed directly for the submarine, which tried to signal it by firing a flare from a mortar, but the shell was a dud and the B-25 resumed circling.

Kent finally had to shut off the engine and set the plane down, hoping for the best. He brought it in parallel to the waves in a landing as "smooth as silk." Nevertheless, the impact shattered Kent's kneecap and fractured the skull of the co-pilot, 1/Lt. Byrd W. Goodson, as they were thrown violently forward into the steering column and instrument panel. 1/Lt. Harry S. Chused, the navigator, helped the two injured men from the craft before it sank.

From six miles away the *Pomfret*, advancing at flank speed, reached the scene in about twenty minutes. The sub-

mariners found two crewmen bobbing in the water and the other three in a life raft.

Kent, still dazed from the crash, thought the submarine pulling up was Japanese and slipped a chrome-plated pistol from his shoulder holster and cocked it. He wasn't at all sure he wanted to be taken alive. He soon realized the sub was friendly, however, and holstered his weapon. A sailor dived in and swam over to help him and a few minutes later he was full of morphine and having his injury treated in the sub's sick bay.

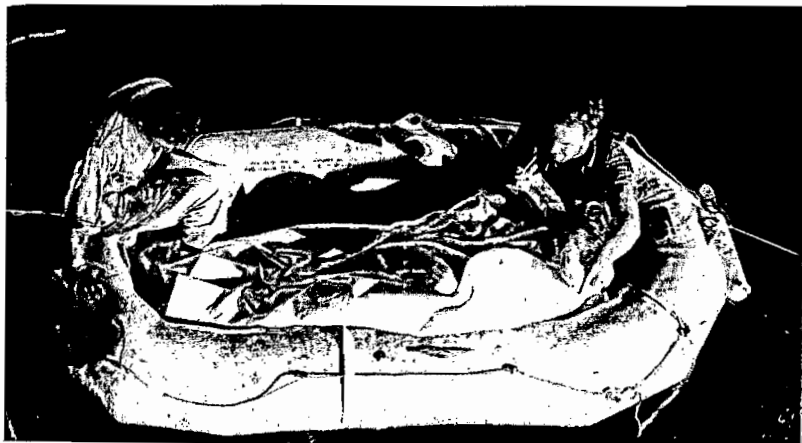
Lt. Com. J.B. Hess notified Okinawa immediately of the pick up, then ordered his submarine back on patrol. During the morning it received three further reports of downed airmen, but all were in areas restricted to the submarine. Meanwhile, despite the best efforts of Chief Pharmacist's Mate Wood who was giving the man morphine and blood plasma, Goodson's condition was deteriorating. Besides a brain concussion, he also had internal injuries and was vomiting blood. The commander of the submarine advised his headquarters that Goodson's critical condition made transfer to another sub ill-advised, so a pick-up by a seaplane was scheduled for the next day.

That evening the *Pomfret* encountered a large two-masted wooden junk and took aboard 23 Jap prisoners who had escaped from Okinawa. The junk was sunk by the deck guns before the sub departed. The soldiers had been without food and water for days and were in terrible condition. Three Korean detainees aboard, who bitterly hated the Japanese, were pressed into service as mess attendants and to guard the ragged lot. The idea worked out well except that the senior Korean, "Pop," continually attempted to cheat the crewmen at Casino. What was even worse for morale was his repeated attempts to trade his 19-year old daughter for his freedom.

The next morning, the submarine stood life guard duty about seventy miles off Nagasaki while a B-29 dropped an atomic bomb on the city. Fortunately its services were not needed, although the plane almost ran out of gas and was forced to make an emergency landing on Okinawa.

A 500th Squadron plane ditched with combat damage off the coast of Kyushu on August 8th. The crew was quickly rescued by the submarine U.S.S. Pomfret which was on lifeguard duty. As seen here, the co-pilot, 1/Lt. Byrd W. Goodson, was transferred to a Martin Mariner flying boat the next day so he could be taken to Okinawa to have his injuries treated. A Navy Pharmacist's Mate tended Goodson, whose skull was fractured, while the navigator, 1/Lt. Harry S. Chused, watched.

(Harry S. Chused Collection)



**MILITARY RECORD AND REPORT OF SEPARATION
CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

30700

1. LAST NAME CHUSED HARRY S		2. ARMY SERIAL NUMBER 0 707 225		3. GRADE OR SERVICE 1st Lt AC	
4. ORGANIZATION 345th Bombardment Group 500th Bombardment Squadron 5th Air Force		7. DATE OF RELIEF FROM ACTIVE DUTY 29 Jan 46		8. PLACE OF SEPARATION Separation Center Fort Devens Mass	
9. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES 39 Freeman St Haverhill Mass		10. DATE OF BIRTH 24 Feb 21		11. PLACE OF BIRTH Haverhill Mass	
12. ADDRESS FROM WHICH EMPLOYMENT WILL BE BROUGHT See #9		13. COLOR EYES blue		14. COLOR HAIR brown	
		15. HEIGHT 5'8"		16. WEIGHT 170 lbs	
17. MARITAL STATUS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Single		18. U.S. CITIZEN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes		21. CIVILIAN OCCUPATION AND NO. Student O-X7	

22. REGISTERED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes			23. LOCAL S. S. BOARD NUMBER unknown			24. COUNTY AND STATE Essex Mass			25. HOME ADDRESS AT TIME OF ENTRY ON ACTIVE DUTY See #9								
26. DATE OF ENTRY ON ACTIVE DUTY 15 Jan 44			27. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY AND NO. Bombardier Navigator Instructor 1036														
28. BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS Southern Philippines Luzon Air Offensive Japan Ryukyus Western Pacific New Guinea China Defensive China Offensive GO Ichi																	
29. DECORATIONS AND CITATIONS Air Medal FEAF GO 1151 P 1 13 Jun 45 American Service Medal World War II Victory Medal Asiatic Pacific Service Medal Distinguished Unit Badge Philippine Liberation Medal																	
30. WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION 6 Aug 45 Japan																	
31. SERVICE SCHOOLS ATTENDED Bombardier Trng Roswell AAF Apr 44						32. SERVICE OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL U. S. AND RETURN											
						DATE OF DEPARTURE 29 Dec 44			DESTINATION Asiatic Pacific Theater								
33. REASONS AND AUTHORITY FOR SEPARATION Demobilization Section II Circular 290 1945						DATE OF DEPARTURE 22 Nov 45			DESTINATION US								
34. CURRENT TOUR OF ACTIVE DUTY																	
CONTINENTAL SERVICE				POPPISH SERVICE				35. EDUCATION (years)									
YEARS	1	MONTHS	1	DAYS	3	YEARS	0	MONTHS	11	DAYS	11	GRAMMAR SCHOOL	8	HIGH SCHOOL	4	COLLEGE	

IMPORTANT IF PREMIUM IS NOT PAID WITHIN THIRTY DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SEPARATION, INSURANCE WILL Lapse. MAKE CERTAIN TO THE TREASURER OF THE U. S. AND FORWARD TO CHIEF OF THE SUBDIVISION, VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.																	
36. KIND OF INSURANCE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Army			37. HOW PAID <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X			38. Effective Date of Annuity 31 Jan 46			39. Date of Next Premium Due (one month after JR) 28 Feb 46			40. PREMIUM DUE EACH MONTH 6.60			41. INTENTION OF VETERAN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X		

42. REMARKS (This space for completion of above items or entry of other items specified in W. D. Directives) Lapel Button Issued ASR Score (2 Sept 45) 67 Cal 45 Pistol MM May 44 M1 Carbine SS May 44 Navigator Wings Ltr of Commendation Gen Kenney FEAF Jun 45											
44. SIGNATURE OF OFFICER BEING SEPARATED <i>Harry S Chused</i>						45. PERSONNEL OFFICER (Type name, grade and organization - signature) BARBARA C WINSLADE Capt AC					

R E S T R I C T E D

STANDARD OPERATIONS PROCEDURE NO. 1-6

NAME CHUSED, HARRYS.

GROUP 345TH BOMB. (M).

RANK 2nd Lt.

SQ. 500TH BOMB. (M).

AERO RATING Navigator

STA. A.P.O. NO. 245

DATE	DU	TYPE	TOTAL TIME			TARGET	REMARKS
			MISS.	CM	CMI		
3-5	N	B+S	3:15			China Coast	Spare Ship
6	N	B+S	10:00			Hainan	
7	N	Recco	14:30			Search	For Lt. Barnes. PBY
12	N	B+S		7:40		China Coast	Weather
15	N	B+S	8:45			Hong Kong	
4-4	N	B+S	6:30			Formosa	
8	N	B+S	9:15			China Coast	Crash land at 10
16	N	B+S	8:35			Formosa	
22	N	B+S		7:50		Hainan	Weather
5-4	N	B+S	2:50			Cuba	
10	N	B+S	6:10			Formosa	
11	N	B+S	6:55			"	
14	N	B+S		2:25		"	Weather
12	N				5:05		72-72-74 C-47
23	N	Bomb	2:20			Luzon	
27	N	B+S	6:30			Formosa	
29	N	B+S	2:55			Luzon	
6-25	N	Red Alert	1:45				Palawan
25-29	N			23:05			74-718 PzL
7-7	N	B+S	7:20			Formosa	
15	N			21:45			74-930-74 C47 70714
23	N			17:05			" " " B-25 70715
29	N	B+S	6:15			Kyushu	
8-8	N	B+S	6:00			Korea	Weather Crashed
9	X	CMT	3:15				Korea. Okinawa. PBY
2-5	N	B+S		1:30		Wewak	713-1
7	N	B+S	4:35			Wewak	Weather 713-1
9	N	B+S	4:35			Wewak	"
7-28	N	Recco	5:45			74-245	CERTIFIED CORRECT
8-4		B+S		2:25		Korea	Stanley Andrews
							STANLEY ANDREWS
							Capt. Air Corps
							Operations Officer
THIS REPORT			149:50	21:50	67:05	TOTAL COMBAT MISSIONS	25
PREV. RPTS.						TOTAL COMBAT HOURS	149:50
TOTALS TO DATE			149:50	21:50	67:05	TOTAL COMBAT POINTS	71
NO. MISSIONS			25				

R E S T R I C T E D

201

500TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (M) AAF
345th Bombardment Group (M) AAF
APO 245

AG 201 - CHUSED, HARRY S. (O)

24 August 1945

Subject: Recommendation for Award of the Purple Heart.

To : Commanding Officer, V Bomber Command, APO 710. (THRU CHANNELS).

1. Under the provisions of AR 600-45, 22 September 1943 as amended, and USAFFE Regulations 10-50, 27 May 44 as amended, it is recommended that First Lieutenant Harry S. Chused, O-707225, Air Corps, 500th Bombardment Squadron, 345th Bombardment Group (M), Navigator, MOS 1036, Mr. Max Chused (Father), 39 Freeman Street, Haverhill, Mass., be awarded the Purple Heart for wounds received in action along the southeast coast of Korea on 8 August 1945.

2. On 8 August 1945 six of our Mitchell bombers participated in a shipping search along the southeast coast of Korea in an early morning minimum altitude attack. Lt. Chused was the navigator on the plane piloted by Lt. Kent. A Sugar Dog was sighted and Lt. Chused's plane made a run on the vessel. The enemy ship was throwing up a concentrated barrage of small arms fire. Bomb and rocket hits were scored on the Sugar Dog causing it to sink. On the return trip to base it was found that an oil line had been severed by a bullet causing the oil pressure in the right engine to drop to zero. The plane mushed along and was finally ditched and the crew were picked up by a submarine which was in the area. All of the crew members except one suffered serious injuries. Lt. Chused received a laceration of the right leg. The combat crewmen were taken to Guam aboard the submarine and later returned to base where the pilot and co-pilot were hospitalized.

3. Lt. Chused was awarded the Air Medal on Far East Air Force General Order No. 1151 dated 13 June 1945.

4. I certify that no portion of this action has been used as the basis for any previous recommendation for the award of a decoration nor will it be used as the basis for a future recommendation.

5. The services of Lt. Chused subsequent to this action have been entirely honorable.

6. During the action covered by this recommendation, Lt. Chused was an officer in the armed forces of the United States.

7. The undersigned has personal knowledge of the above described action.

8. One other member of this crew is being recommended for the award of the Purple Heart at this time due to the fact that it is believed that the hospital will award the Purple Heart to the pilot and co-pilot.

1 Incl:
Medical Certificate.

ROBERT F. TODD,
Major, Air Corps,
Commanding.