



HAROLD R. TUSHLA
First Lieutenant (1st Lt), United States (U. S.) Army Air Forces

PERSONAL INFORMATION: First Lieutenant Harold R. Tushla, service number O-660935, entered service on 4 November 1941, in Los Angeles, California.¹ During the Second World War, he served in the 330th Bombardment Squadron, 93d Bombardment Group, Eighth Air Force.² First Lieutenant Tushla was killed during a mission over Naples Harbor, Italy, on 15 February 1943. His remains were not accounted for after the war. Today, he is memorialized on the Tablets of the Missing at North African American Cemetery, in Carthage, Tunisia.³ The circumstances of 1st Lt Tushla's case are recorded in his Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF) and Missing Air Crew Reports (MACR) 16372 and 16465.⁴

Crew of B-24-D-1-CO, serial number 41-23675, <i>Celhalopdos</i>, MACRs 16372 and 16465				
Name	Rank	Service Number	Crew Position	Status
Moore, Charles T.	Capt	O-435976	Pilot	Unaccounted For
Brown, Robert L.	1st Lt	O-724587	Co-pilot	Unaccounted For
Tushla, Harold R.	1st Lt	O-660935	Navigator	Unaccounted For
Paschal, John F., JR	1st Lt	O-660391	Bombardier	Unaccounted For
Smith, Walter D.	T Sgt	38009131	Radio Operator	Unaccounted For
Thompson, Augustus B.	T Sgt	38044692	Navigator	Unaccounted For
Luglio, Benjamin J.	S Sgt	12012650	Gunner	Unaccounted For
Coffelt, James R.	S Sgt	34189424	Gunner	Unaccounted For
Dennis, Clifton E., JR	S Sgt	15071253	Gunner	Unaccounted For
Robinson, Harry R.	S Sgt	13053844	Gunner	Unaccounted For

CIRCUMSTANCES OF LOSS: First Lieutenant Tushla was a member of the 330th Bombardment Squadron, 93d Bombardment Group. In the fall of 1942, the bomb group moved to bases in England under the Eighth Air Force. The 330th Bombardment Squadron was part of a detachment that was sent to support campaigns in North Africa in December 1942. After Allied

¹ Enlistment information for Harold R. Tushla, 19062100, Electronic Army Serial Number Merged File, ca. 1938-1946, World War II Army Enlistment Records, Record Group (RG) 64: Records of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD. Searchable database accessible from this web address: <http://aad.archives.gov/aad>. **NOTE:** First Lieutenant (1st Lt) Tushla first enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps as an Aviation Cadet and was issued the service number 19062100. When he was commissioned as an officer in the United States Army Air Forces he received a new service number O-660935.

² Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF) for Harold R. Tushla, 1st Lt, O-660935, RG 92: Records of the Office of Quartermaster General, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, MO.

³ World War II Honor Roll listing for Harold R. Tushla, 1st Lt, O-660935, American Battle Monuments Commission <http://www.abmc.gov>.

⁴ IDPF for 1st Lt Tushla; Missing Air Crew Report (MACR) 16372, The Missing Air Crew Reports of the U.S. Army Air Forces, 1942-1947, National Archives Microfilm Publication M1380, RG 92, NARA. **NOTE:** MACR 16465 is a second, one-page MACR which was created at a later date. This MACR reflects later information received regarding the possible fate of crew members.

successes in Africa, the squadrons assisted in bombing campaigns in Italy, in preparation for planned ground troop landings.⁵

On 15 February 1943, B-24 bombers left Tobruk Landing Field 139, Libya, on a mission to bomb nine merchant vessels in the harbor at Naples, Italy (Figure 1). First Lieutenant Tushla's aircraft, B-24D serial number 41-23675 (#41-23675), nicknamed *Celhalopdos*, participated in the raid with Captain (Capt) Charles T. Moore as pilot. As the formation was attacking the enemy merchant vessels in the harbor, anti-aircraft fire, or flak, hit the B-24 #41-23675. Other pilots on the mission witnessed four enemy aircraft attack 1st Lt Tushla's bomber and saw the B-24 crew return fire. The stricken bomber was last seen under control but losing altitude as it headed toward the Italian coast. No parachute sightings were reported. No search was attempted.⁶



Figure 1. Google Earth image of the Mediterranean Theater. Tobruk, Libya is to the lower center, red marker. Naples Harbor, Italy where First Lieutenant Tushla's aircraft was last seen is upper left, white marker.

SEARCH AND RECOVERY: There is no known historical evidence of a search and rescue attempt. The American Graves Registration Service - Mediterranean Zone (AGRS-MZ) was the organization that searched for and recovered fallen American personnel during and after the Second World War in the Mediterranean Theater. Units searched for remains of deceased

⁵ Mauer Mauer, editor, "Air Force Combat Units of World War II," Office of Air Force History, Washington, D.C. 1983, 160-161.

⁶ Katherine Bradley, "Review and Determination of Status," 18 March 1944, in MACR 16372; Mary E. Oldfather, "Report of Death," 18 May 1949, IDPF for 1st Lt Tushla.

American servicemen along the western coastline of Italy with negative findings for 1st Lt Tushla or his crewmates.⁷

On 1 July 1948, following an unsuccessful attempt by investigators to recover or identify 1st Lt Tushla, a Board of Officers from the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps recommended his remains be declared non-recoverable.⁸ This recommendation was approved on 8 July 1948.⁹ On 9 May 1951, 1st Lt Tushla's record was reviewed a final time by the Office of the Quartermaster General, with no change to his status.¹⁰

For unknown reasons, a second missing air crew report, MACR 16465, was created. This single-page MACR only documents a report by unnamed family members about crew members possibly recognized in a photograph. A notation on the MACR states the next of kin and friends positively identified some members of the crew in a news photograph dated 13 April 1943 with the title "Yanks Prisoners, Say Italians".¹¹ The photograph is not included in the MACR. Post-war investigators were unable to establish identification of any of the crew of the B-24 #41-23675 in this photograph. None of crew, including 1st Lt Tushla, were reported as prisoners of war, nor were their names on German Death Lists. Captured German records were reviewed with negative mention of any crewmember.¹²

RECENT INVESTIGATIONS: To date, researchers in the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) have not located an extant copy of the photograph in question. DPAA historians are aware of research conducted by family members of the missing crewmembers, specifically communications from the Italian Air Force Historical Office about missions on 15 February 1943, and welcome further information.¹³

Researchers at DPAA reviewed National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) nautical charts for the Gulf of Naples, the general area where 1st Lt Tushla's aircraft was last seen. Except for very close to the shoreline, the depths are well over 300 feet, with some areas as deep at 1,200 feet (Figure 2).

⁷ Major (Maj) T. J. Anderson, "Certificate," 14 June 1948, IDPF for 1st Lt Tushla.

⁸ Maj Bailey Skinner, "Proceedings of Board of Officers," 1 July 1948, IDPF for 1st Lt Tushla.

⁹ Colonel Whitfield W. Watson, "Proceedings of Board of Officers," 8 July 1948, IDPF for 1st Lt Tushla.

¹⁰ Captain G. W. Rogers, "Non-Recoverable Case Record Review and Approval," 18 July 1949, IDPF for 1st Lt Tushla; 1st Lt Mary A. Edwards, "Non-Recoverable Remains Reexamination of records," 9 May 1951, IDPF for 1st Lt Tushla.

¹¹ MACR 16465, NARA.

¹² Mary Oldfather, "Report of Death," 18 May 1949, Approved, Maj T. J. Collum, IDPF for 1st Lt Tushla.

¹³ Email communication with Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), DPAA electronic case file.

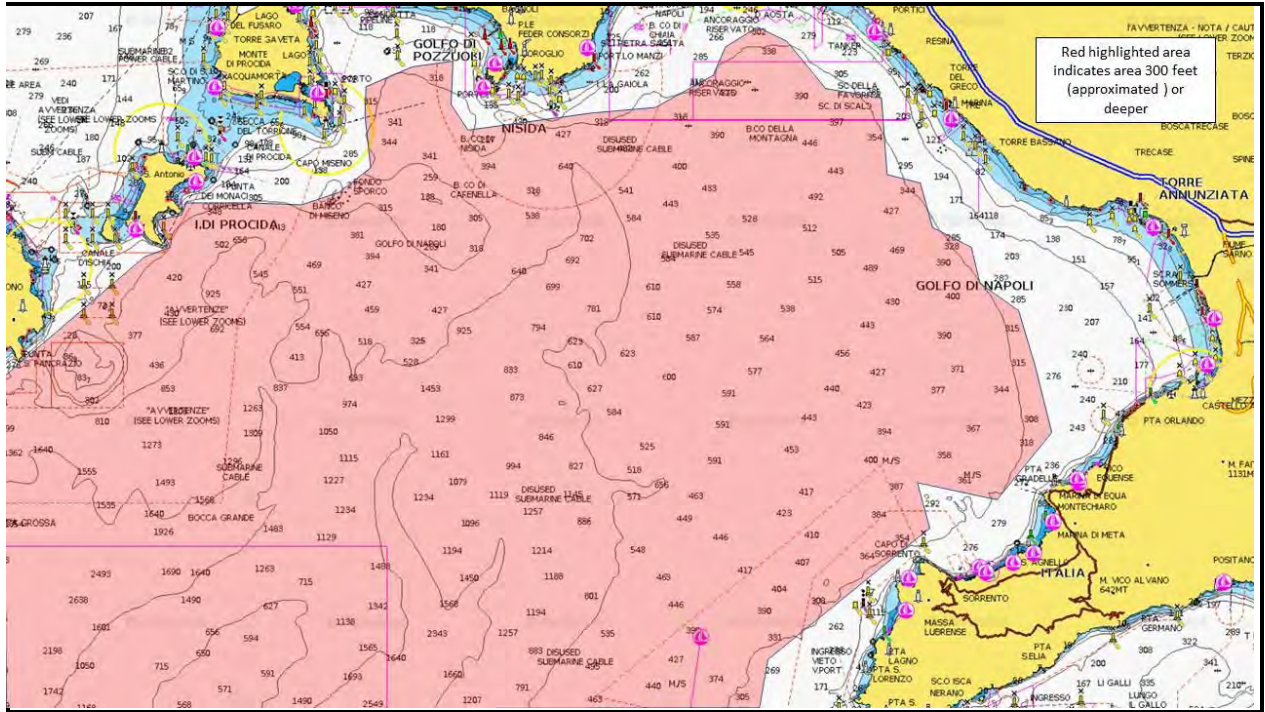


Figure 2. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) nautical charts for the Gulf of Naples. The red-shaded areas mark depths over 300 feet. (NOAA).

NEXT STEPS: Researchers at DPAA have no new information regarding the whereabouts of 1st Lt Tushla’s remains. Without any leads to possible isolated burials or a wreck site of his aircraft, DPAA considers his case to be in a Non-Recoverable status. New information related to his case may be communicated through the Army Service Casualty Office.

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