

Ref "D" - Letter from General Beau to General Edwards

HEADQUARTERS  
EUROPEAN AIR TRANSPORT SERVICE (Prov.)

APO 633

U.S. ARMY

Wiesbaden, Germany  
6 November 1946

Major General I. H. Edwards  
Commanding General  
US Air Forces in Europe  
APO 633, US Army

Dear General Edwards,

A missing aircraft is indeed a terrible thing,. I feel it is one of the most difficult things to explain.

I cannot help but believe that Colonel Upham was one of the best qualified and experienced B-17 pilots in the theater. He was a member of the old 19<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group at Marsh Field and started flying B-17's about 1939 or early 1940. He was a member of the 15th Air Force in Italy during the war. Colonel Fair was very meticulous in every detail. Major Cobb was a young officer, but had a very good head on his shoulders. I mention the above because I have just received a complete story from the weather officer stationed at Capodichino, which is self-explanatory.

These officers were on a routine flight from Naples to Bovington, and when we consider the experience of the three officers, it leaves me at a complete loss to try to evaluate this mishap. To think these experienced officers would clear after being briefed by the station weather officer and forecaster of the icing and severe thunderstorms along their route is beyond my comprehension. Colonel Upham cleared the flight, being a command pilot. With *(h)*is ability, I am sure he could have force-landed the airplane practically anywhere without injury to his crew. I fear they ran into severe icing conditions or turbulence to a dangerous degree.

We have fifty-five airplanes out searching along his flight plan. Today we are searching the Alps with the help of the Swiss Air Force. All reports to date have been negative.

Sincerely,

Signed            Lucas V. Beau  
                         Brigadier General USA  
                         Commanding