

Extract from "Beware The Thunderbolt" by David R McLaren

August 3: VIIIIFC FO 476. Bomber Command attacked strategic and tactical targets along the border between France and Germany, along with tactical targets around Paris. The 56th Fighter Group again went dive bombing. Col. Zemke led them off at 1306 with thirty-two Thunderbombers carrying one 250 pound GP each and fifteen P-47s as escort. The 62nd Fighter Squadron hit the marshalling yards at Saarebourg with only fair results coming from the bombing. However, strafing accounted for twelve locomotives destroyed and ten damaged. The 61st FS, Led by Capt. Smith, flew as top cover for the other two squadrons, and with no Luftwaffe to be seen, went down to strafe. They accounted for two locomotives destroyed and sixty boxcars damaged.

Ten miles southwest of Saarebourg, on the railroad line to Luneville, Zemke spotted a cement factory and sent three flights of his 63rd FS down to bomb it. And then Zemke spotted a slow moving train. On his second strafing pass at the train an FW190 came in behind him, and White Two, 2nd Lt. Richard Anderson, cut in behind it and started to fire. The FW190 broke left and Anderson kept after him, firing again. The FW190 straightened out, and Anderson fired once again and the German pilot had enough and bailed out. A classic example of a good wingman doing exactly what he was supposed to do.

Capt. Roy Fling, leading Yellow Flight, 63rd FS, saw what he believed to be the loss of 1st Lt. Roach Stewart, Blue Three. "The plane was flying over an area which was heavily defended by light (caliber) flak and there was a heavy concentration at the time. The plane continued in a straight course, taking no evasive action whatsoever, and then started a gentle turn, losing altitude slowly. Flames appeared around the cockpit and it rolled over to the left, crashing in a wooded area just east of Luneville and burst into flames immediately." When Fling had first spotted the P-47 it was already trailing smoke, so possibly Stewart had already bailed out, as he survived the war*.

This is incorrect as Stewart did not survive the war. Another account says that no parachute was seen.

KU Report J-1856 gives position of crash as 3.5 km West of Blamond and 30 km East of Luneville on the road between Antrepierre and Verdental.

Roach S Stewart Jr was from Lancaster, South Carolina. He joined the 63rd Fighter Squadron on 12 April 1944 as a 2/Lt and was promoted to 1/Lt on 7 July 1944. At the time of his loss on 3 August, he had completed 61 missions for a total of 238 hours, 45 minutes combat time. The P-47 that he was flying at the time of his loss was assigned to him.