



Leon Tomberg

23-42

**First Lieutenant, U.S. Army Air
Forces**

Service # 1167254

**62nd Bomber Squadron
39th Bomber Group, Very Heavy**

Entered the Service from: New York

Died: 24-May-1945

Missing in Action or Buried at Sea

**Tablets of the Missing at Honolulu Memorial
Honolulu, Hawaii**

Awards: Air Medal, Purple Heart



1LT Tomberg was a serving as a Bombardier on "Tian Long" ("Sky Dragon") B-29 # 42-65362 that was lost on a mission with the target of Tokyo South Urban Area.

Missing Crew Report - Crew 52:

Capt Richard E. Paquette	Airplane Commander	MIA: 24 May 1945
1st Lt Joe B. Medina	Pilot	MIA: 24 May 1945
1st Lt Jack B. Covington	Navigator	MIA: 24 May 1945
1st Lt Leon Tomberg	Bombardier - replacement	MIA: 24 May 1945
2nd Lt Gerald M. Levinson	Radar Observer	MIA: 24 May 1945
1st Lt William A. Reith	Flight Engineer	MIA: 24 May 1945
S/Sgt Robert J. Sabol	Radio Operator	MIA: 24 May 1945
Sgt Milton F. Haines	CFC Gunner	MIA: 24 May 1945
Cpl David W. Barr	Tail Gunner - replacement	MIA: 24 May 1945
Sgt Sherwood C. Kiernan	Right Gunner	
1st Lt Robert C. Morton	Bombardier - injured 14 May mission	
S/Sgt Lewis E. Howard	Tail Gunner 14 June 2007	

Tomberg is listed as bombardier on Crew 50 at the time of Stateside Departure March/April 1945. According to a phone conversation with Lewis Howard, Tail Gunner, who was not on the 23 24 May 1945 night raid with his crew, 1st Lt Robert Morton, the crew's regular bombardier was injured during the 14 May 1945 mission to Nagoya and was left at Iwo Jima. Since Crew 52 was in need of a bombardier that accounts for why Leon Tomberg was on this crew.

On May 24, the 39th flew its first of the devastating fire raids on Tokyo. By One AM, dozens of fires lit up the skies and huge billows of smoke shrouded the city. The pathfinders had gone over the city to light the way. The main bombing force had just started dropping and smoke columns were rising to over 10,000 feet already. Twelve of the 34 planes bombed visually, the rest, by radar.

Flak, searchlights, and several "fire-balls" plus the thermal currents made it a living hell. Frantic "May Day" calls from crippled B-29s filled the air waves. Many would be forced to ditch or abandon their planes.

The toll in B-29 losses was the heaviest to date. Twenty-six Superforts went down and at least eighty others received some degree of damage. Captain Paquette and his crew were one of those twenty-six lost that night.