

**Crash of American Thunderbolt pilot
William V. Schleppegrell
*1st January 1944, near Völklingen***

**Combat report
by 2nd Lt. Eliel Archilla (1944)**

“While dive-bombing the railroad yards at Bad Kreuznach 2nd Lt. Schleppegrell (Yellow 4) was hit by light, intense flak. He said he was hit but it didn't appear so bad to him. I told Discharge Leader that I was taking him home and headed out on a course of 220°. Contacted Baggage for coming home. I pulled up close to him and saw oil over the belly and cowling of the airplane. I asked him how his oil pressure was and he said o. k. Thirty (30) miles NE of Saarbrücken he suddenly said his oil pressure dropped to zero (0) and the engine was cutting out. We flew along for twenty (20) miles more and then his engine cut out completely. This was at approximately 10.00 hrs. He said he was bailing out and I then saw the parachute open and the airplane crashed in an open field and exploded. I saw him hit the ground and he appeared to be alright. I pinpointed him about five (5) miles NE of Saarbrücken.”