455th Bomb Group Accident Reports

Manual transcription

This transcription covers all 243 historical pages in the consolidated scans. The 245-page scan PDF begins with two modern index pages. Consolidated scan page numbers identify the source for each entry.

Brackets identify editorial notes, unclear readings, and damaged text. Table entries are represented in reading order. Blank form fields are omitted unless their absence matters.

42-7413 | 1943-11-20

WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. Form No. 14
U.S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Handwritten: 53-053. Other marks partly illegible.]
(1) Place: Langley Field, Virginia. (2) Date: November 20, 1943. (3) Time: 1720.
(4) Type and model: B-24E. (5) A.F. No.: 42-7413. (6) Station: Langley Field, Virginia.
(7) I BC, 1 AF. (8) 455th (H). (9) 741st Bomb. (H).

PERSONNEL
Duty | Name | Rating | Serial number | Rank
P | WURTZ, NELSON A. | P | O-682937 | 2nd Lt.
CP | SUTERA, ALLEN E. | CP | O-691311 | 2nd Lt.
N | SLOCUM, WALTER L. | N | O-690495 | 2nd Lt.
B | LANS, NELS (NMI) | B | T-121952 | F/O
E | DRAPER, WILLIAM E. | [illegible] | 34404385 | Sgt.
AE | ASHLEY, FRANK A. | [illegible] | 35369411 | Sgt.
RO | GROSS, HUGO R. | [illegible] | 32669776 | S/Sgt.
ARO | NEWMAN, WILLIAM J. | [illegible] | 12158921 | Sgt.
Gr | KAMPA, BERNARD W. | [illegible] | 37461572 | Sgt.
Gr | KLEIN, EMANUEL (NMI) | [illegible] | 32444200 | Sgt.
[Personnel class partly obscured by handwriting. Branch: AC AUS. Air force: 1 AF. Result: NONE. Parachute: NO throughout.]

(20–24) WURTZ, NELSON A.; O-682937; 2nd Lt.; class 18; AC AUS.
(25–32) Assigned and attached for flying: 1st BC, 1st AF; 455th; 741st; Langley Field, Va. [Some entries obscured by stamp.]
(33–37) Original rating: Pilot, 6-26-43. Present rating: Pilot, 6-26-43.
(38–41) First pilot hours: this type 197:45; this model 197:45; last 90 days 152:10; total 446:15.
(46–49) Aircraft damage: [Codes partly overwritten.] SEE CERTIFICATE — SUB DEPOT MAINTENANCE OFFICER, INCLOSURE #4.
(50) Weather: CAVU. (51) Flying on instruments: No.
(52–54) Cleared from Langley Field to Langley Field. Clearance: Local.
(55) Pilot’s mission: High Altitude Formation Flying.
(56) Nature of accident: Structural Failure — Landing Gear.
(57) Cause of accident: Aircraft Structure — Collapse of Right Landing Gear Strut.
(58) See Inclosure #5.
RESTRICTED. [Receipt stamp: JAN 6 1944. Page stamp: 122.]

42-7413 | 1943-11-20

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT
(Brief narrative of accident. Include statement of responsibility and recommendations for action to prevent repetition.)

1. At 1717 EST, 20 November 1943, 2nd LT. NELSON A WURTZ, O-682937, as pilot came in for a landing in B-24E, AF No. 42-7413 and soon after landing his right wing began to settle and the right landing gear collapsed. The aircraft skidded to a stop on its belly.

2. Upon investigation of the accident it is the belief of the investigating officer that the accident was caused by mechanical failure. The left actuating cylinder leaked pressure causing pressure to build up on the other side of the left actuating cylinder which in turn caused right gear to release and collapse.

a. Statements from the entire crew were not obtained as the group was in the process of moving when accident occurred and part of crew departed without submitting statements and as yet none have been received from their present station.

3. No recommendations are made.

5 Incls:
Incl 1 — Stmt of Pilot — Lt. WURTZ
Incl 2 — Stmt of A.E. — Sgt. DRAPER
Incl 3 — AAF Form 1 — Flight Report
Incl 4 — Certificate Sub Depot — Maintenance Officer
Incl 5 — AAF Form 54 — Unsatisfactory Report.

[Signed] JAMES W. GRAY, JR., Captain, Air Corps.
Date: 20 December 1943. [Page stamp: 122.]

42-7413 | 1943-11-20

WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. FORM NO. 1
FLIGHT REPORT — OPERATIONS
Date: 11-20-43. Station: Langley Field, Va. Group: 455 Bomb. (H).
Airplane model: B-24E. Serial No.: 42-7413.
Crew chief or aerial engineer: Draper, William E. Squadron: 741st Sqdn.

Class	Name, rank and serial	Duty
18	WURTZ, NELSON A., 2nd Lt., O-682937	P
18	SUTERA, ALLEN E., 2nd Lt., O-691311	CP
18	SLOCUM, WALTER L., 2nd Lt., O-690495	N
18	LANS, NELS (NMI), F/O, T-121952	B
38	Draper, William E., Sgt., 34404385	E
38	Ashley, Frank A., Sgt., 35369411	AE
38	Gross, Hugo R., S/Sgt., 32669776	RO
38	Newman, William J., Sgt., 12158921	ARO
38	Kampa, Bernard W., Sgt., 37461572	Gr
38	Klein, Emanuel (NMI), Sgt., 32444200	Gr

3:50 recorded against each crew member. Flight data: Local, 1330 and 1720. Mission: T. No. of landings: 1.
Total flight time: 3:50.
A TRUE COPY: [Signed] H. R. GRAFF, Captain, AC, Operations Officer.
[Marked INCL #3. Page stamp: 122.]

42-7413 | 1943-11-20

CERTIFICATE
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I was coming in for a landing when the right landing gear folded. Our gear had been checked down and locked by our Engineers and the gear warning light was on and the gear handle was in the neutral position. Upon landing our right wing slowley settled and we slid to a stop on the belly of the ship.

[Signed] NELSON A. WURTZ,
2nd Lt., AC., O-682937
Pilot of Ship No. 42-7413.

CERTIFICATE
[Marked INCL #1. Page stamp: 122.]

42-7413 | 1943-11-20

CERTIFICATE
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

We were coming in for a landing when the right landing gear folded. Our gear had been checked down and locked by myself and my assistants and the gear warning light was on and the gear handle was in the neutral position. Upon landing our right wing slowley settled and we slid to a stop on the belly of the ship. Reason for the collapse of the gear unknown.

[Signed] WILLIAM E. DRAPER JR.,
S/Sgt. 34404385
Aerial Engineer
Ship No. 42-7413.

Witnessed by me 1 December 1943.
[Signed] JOHN [initial unclear] DAVIS,
Captain, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

CERTIFICATE
[Marked INCL #2. Page stamp: 122.]

42-7413 | 1943-11-20

Langley Field, Virginia.
27 November 1943.

CERTIFICATE

I certify that B-24E Airplane, A. C. No. 42-7413, Engine Model R-1830-43, Numbers 42-60212, 42-59936, 42-67467 and 42-60255, assigned to the 741st Bombardment Squadron, Langley Field, Virginia, was involved in an aircraft accident 20 November 1943 at Langley Field, Virginia and the following list of damaged parts will require repair as indicated.

No. 4 Propeller — 3rd Echelon
Fuselage — 3rd Echelon
Right Landing Gear — 3rd Echelon
Rear Bomb Bay Door — 3rd Echelon
Engine No. 42-60255 — 4th Echelon
Right Tire — Condemned

It is the opinion of this Department that materiel failure caused the accident. Inspection revealed that the actuating cylinder, left landing gear, was leaking, allowing the right landing gear down lock to unlock, causing the landing gear to collapse.

[Signed] JOHN JULIAN,
Captain, Air Corps,
SUB-DEPOT MAINTENANCE OFFICER.
[Marked INCL #4. Page stamp: 122.]

42-7413 | 1943-11-20

WAR DEPARTMENT — ARMY AIR FORCES
UNSATISFACTORY REPORT — A.A.F. Form No. 54
Station Serial No.: 43-464. Date submitted: 23 Dec 43.
Station: Langley Field, Virginia. Organization: 51st Sub-Depot.
Property class/name: 030 Actuating Cylinder.
Manufacturer: Aircraft Accessory Corp.
AAF order or number: 220263-2 [reading uncertain].
Airplane: B-24E, 42-7413.
Part: Packing. Part drawing, serial and specification no.: 32W5878-57 [reading uncertain].
[Disposition box checked: Repaired and returned to service.]
EXPEDITE

DESCRIPTION OF UNSATISFACTORY CONDITION:
Packing, Part No. 32W5878-57 [reading uncertain], in the left actuating cylinder leaked pressure, causing pressure to build up on the other side of the left actuating cylinder. This caused the down lock on the right gear to release and the gear to collapse.

For the Commanding Officer:
[Signed] EDWARD J. FLANDERS,
2nd Lt., Air Corps,
Asst. Sub-Depot Maint. Officer.

ROUTING: Send original and two copies direct to Commanding General, HQ. Air Service Command, Patterson Field, Fairfield, Ohio.
[Marked INCL #5. Page stamp: 122.]

42-7413 | 1943-11-20

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR BASE
LANGLEY FIELD, VIRGINIA

300.33
4 January 1944

SUBJECT: Report of Aircraft Accident.
TO: Chief, Flying Safety, Nissen Building, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

1. Transmitted herewith original of AAF Form 14 covering aircraft accident of B-24E, AC Serial Number 42-7413, Pilot 2nd Lt. NELSON A. WURTZ.

2. Delay in submitting report occasioned by the fact that personnel involved in the accident were in the process of transfer to an overseas destination, and statements from part of the crew could not be obtained. To date none have been received from their present station.

For the Commanding Officer:
[Signed] ROBERT W. [surname unclear],
Captain, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

1 Incl:
Fm 14 w/5 Incls.
[Page stamp: 122.]

41-28520 | 1943-11-28

WAR DEPARTMENT — U.S. ARMY AIR FORCES
REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT — A.A.F. Form No. 14
[Handwritten: 93-121. Accident number partly obscured.]
(1) Cobb Island, Virginia. (2) 28 November 1943. (3) 1520 EWT [partly obscured].
(4) B-24E. (5) A.F. No. 41-28520. (6) Langley Field, Va.
(7) 1st B.C., 1st AF. (8) 455th Bomb Gp. (9) 743rd Bomb Sq. (H).

PERSONNEL
Duty | Name | Serial number | Rank
P | SMITH, HENRY J. | O-660826 | 1st Lt.
CP | HELFNER, HOWARD J. | O-691502 | 2nd Lt.
N | GROSS, JOSEPH [handwritten correction] | O-811631 | 2nd Lt.
B | RANDALL, FRANK B. | O-748103 [final digits uncertain] | 2nd Lt.
E | VANCE, DUANE S. | 13133869 | S/Sgt.
AE | INGALLS, ROBERT D. | 37462396 | S/Sgt.
RO | MURRAY, VICTOR E. | 14085754 | Sgt.
AR | CATT, JAMES L. | 14151492 | Sgt.
AG | BUSH, DUANE D. | 38397097 | S/Sgt.
AAG | OWEN, BEN G. | 38415691 | Sgt.
[First five ratings: P, CP, N, B, E. Classes partly overwritten. Branch AC; first row RES, remaining AUS. Command 1st AF. Result NONE and parachute NO throughout.]

(20–24) SMITH, HENRY J.; O-660826; 1st Lt.; 01; AC RES.
(25–32) Assigned and attached: 1st B.C., 1st AF; 455th Bomb Gp.; 743rd Bomb Sq. (H); Langley Field, Va.
(33–37) Pilot, 24 May 42; Pilot, 5/24/42; instrument rating 20 Oct 1943.
(38–41) First pilot hours: this type 114:10; this model 99:15; last 90 days 91:25; total 299:35.
(46–49) Damage: W entered for aircraft, engines and propellers. See Incl. #1 (Sub-Depot).
(50) Ceiling unlimited, visibility 6 miles in haze, surface winds seven miles northeast.
(51) No. (52–54) Cleared from Langley Field to Langley Field; Local.
(55) High altitude bombing and gunnery formation.
(56) Forced landing.
(57) Failure of electrical system. Runaway propellers.
(58) No Form 54 required. RESTRICTED.

41-28520 | 1943-11-28

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

On 28 November 1943 at approximately 1520 EWT, airplane B-24E AAF Serial No. 42-28520 [as typed], Pilot Henry J. Smith, 1st Lt., O-660826, had a forced landing on the East Coast of Cobb Island, Virginia. The flight was on oxygen at 20,000 feet for practice bombing and aerial gunnery, approximately seventy (70) miles off the Cape Charles peninsula. All engines were normal during the ascent to the assigned altitude and the crew was engaged in gunnery when the trouble started. At this time #1 engine's prop went out with the resulting high R.P.M. When an attempt was made to correct this condition it was found that the entire electrical system was out. By the pilots testimony before the Board he states that at this time everything failed to function, the instruments were fluctuating and motors #2, 3, and 4 gave indications of high R.P.M. As the instruments were out, the pilot makes these statements strictly from a sense of sound and feel (vibration) and should be taken as such. Turning for land and establishing a glide, the pilot tried everything at his command to increase the power enough to enable him to reach the Base. Failing in the attempt to regain power the pilot then decided to set it down on the Beach, which was hard and level. The landing was smooth as was shown by the skid marks but the props of 2, 3, and 4 were torn off, each taking a piece of the engines nose section with it. The plane did not catch fire on landing or could any evidence of fire be found after, but crew members at the scene of the accident stated the right wing was on fire after the ship turned on final approach. It is possible such fire as may have been, was coming from the exhaust as no damage from fire could be found.

On 27 November at night, Pilot Smith was flying the same ship (520) on "local instruments" in the vicinity of the field when in his and the engineers opinion, the same trouble came up. When things started going wrong Pilot Smith called Langley tower for an emergency landing which he executed without mishap. It was found that three generators had to be changed. Nothing is known why the generators burned out but the Board believes this identical malfunction occurred on the 28th when 520 was out over the water. On inspection of one of the spark plugs from number 1 engine the center electrode was burned completely out.

Just after the accident Lt. Smith told one of the Board members, "I told them it shouldn't fly" (meaning 520). From this statement and other supporting facts the Board believes this particular ship (520) wasn't given proper maintenance. Another fact is the Engineer's testimony where he stated two of the four generators were operating with a full electrical load of flying suits, turrets and heaters on the circuit. Asked why all three generators weren't operating the pilot stated its a policy to keep a generator in reserve to get home on in the event of trouble. One generator was out before take off.

The board believes ignorance on the part of operating personnel and lack of proper maintenance to be the direct cause of the forced landing of the aircraft. (The Board would like to point out at this time the difficulties involved reaching and conducting an investigation. The attached pictures were taken the second day after the crash, results of one night's tide can be seen. The tide doesn't recede enough to work on the aircraft until approximately 1300 o'clock, limiting a days work to four hours).

It is recommended by this Board that proper maintenance and more detailed instructions to flying crews on the electrical system under full load of such aircraft be accomplished by the Squadron.

14 Incls:
1 Certificate of sub depot
2 Stmt of pilot
3 Stmt of Lt. Helfer [as typed]

4 Stmt of Lt. Gross
5 Stmt of Lt. Randall
6 Stmt of Sgt. Owen
7 Stmt of S/Sgt. Bush
8 Stmt of Sgt. Catt
9 Stmt of S/Sgt. Vance
10 Stmt of S/Sgt. Ingalls
11 Stmt of Sgt. Murray
12 Form 1A
13 Form 1
14 Photographs

[Signatures] RICHARD G. BUSHNELL, Major, A.C.; WALTER E. THORNE, Capt., Air Corps; ALVIN M. LUSK, Capt., Air Corps; HENRY L. [surname unclear], Capt., A.C.; CHARLES B. [surname unclear] JR., Capt.
DATE: 10 December 1943.

41-28520 | 1943-11-28

WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. FORM NO. 1
FLIGHT REPORT — OPERATIONS
Date 11-28-43. Langley Field, Virginia. 455 Bomb. (H).
Crew chief or aerial engineer: Vance, Duane S., S/Sgt.
743 Bomb. (H). Airplane model B-24E. Serial 41-28520.

Class	Crew member	Rank	Serial
01	SMITH, HENRY J.	1st Lt.	O-660826
18	HELFNER, HOWARD J.	2nd Lt.	O-691502
18	GROSS, JOSEPH	2nd Lt.	O-811631
18	RANDALL, FRANK B.	2nd Lt.	O-748103 [uncertain]
38	VANCE, DUANE S.	S/Sgt.	13133869
38	INGALLS, ROBERT D.	S/Sgt.	37462396
38	MURRAY, VICTOR E.	Sgt.	14085754
38	CATT, JAMES L.	Sgt.	14151492
38	BUSH, DUANE D.	S/Sgt.	38397097
38	OWEN, BEN G.	Sgt.	38415691

Each entry records 1:20. Flight data: LOCAL, 14:00 to 15:20; one landing; total flight time 1:20.
[Signed] HENRY J. SMITH, 1ST LT., AIR CORPS.
[Handwritten enclosure number appears to be 14.]

41-28520 | 1943-11-28

WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. FORM NO. 1A
FLIGHT REPORT — ENGINEERING

INSPECTION STATUS: Preflight; Daily; 25 Hours; 50 Hours; 100 Hours.
SERVICING AT STATION OF TAKE-OFF: Fuel (gallons); oil (quarts), engines No. 1 through No. 4; radiators checked.
INSPECTION OF AUXILIARY EQUIPMENT: Bombardment; Gunnery; Chemical; Communications; Photographic; Navigation.
[Most handwritten or typed entries in these tables are too faint to read confidently.]

EXCEPTIONAL RELEASE
When the “Status Today” is indicated by a red symbol and an “Exceptional Release” has not been granted by an authorized engineering officer, the pilot of the airplane will sign this release before flight.
Released for flight: [Signed] Henry J. Smith.
REMARKS: PILOTS AND MECHANICS — SEE INSTRUCTIONS INSIDE FRONT COVER.
[Remarks faint, with signature] Henry J. Smith, 1st Lt., A.C.
AIRPLANE AND ENGINE TIME RECORD
[Times too faint to read confidently.]
[Signed] HENRY J. SMITH, 1ST LT., AIR CORPS.
ENGINE DATA / AIRPLANE DATA / AIRPLANE ORG. DATA
Airplane model B-24E; serial 41-28520; 743 Bomb (H); 455 Bomb (H). [Several engine and organization entries faint or obscured.]
[Handwritten INCL. #13.]

41-28520 | 1943-11-28

STATEMENT
TO: Whom it may concern.

On November 28, I took off at 1400 Langley Field, Va. with a full crew aboard. The flight scheduled was high altitude bombing and gunnery. Our ascent to the desired altitude was by circling above Langley Field until an altitude of approximately 15,000 ft. was reached at which time I took a course heading of 72 degrees to the bombing range at Cape Charles. During this operation there was normal operation with the aircraft.

While approaching the target our interphone system became weak but no indication of electrical failure. The bombardier then returned from his bombsight stating that there was a malfunction within the sight, so I took a easterly heading to the gunnery range at which time by messenger I had the men take their gun positions and start firing. From this point to approximately thirty (30) miles out on the open water there was normal operation of the aircraft and approximately one hundred (100) rounds of ammunition was fired per gun per man.

Then Engine No. 1 ran away, at which time I performed emergency feathering procedure but due to failure of the electrical system my efforts were in vain. During this operation I had to contact my engineer by messenger as he was in the upper turret. When he returned to the pilot's compartment the generators were out but he tried to bring in No. 4 generator. It came in for an instant and then went out.

As my instruments were out the other three engines gave way and my power was almost nil. I immediately turned my plane to 270 degrees and headed for Langley Field, still trying to get the needed power to carry and hold the plane's altitude. But this was in vain and I started to lose altitude hoping to have sufficient altitude and power. [Several words obscured.] The descent of the plane, which I held at between 150 and 160 air speed, and thought perhaps icing had occurred, made me think that it was almost impossible to reach the field. I then had the men prepare for bail-out and stand by for that command. At approximately 12,000 feet, and still no return of power I had the crew throw overboard everything that would lessen the weight and in case of engine explosion would be prepared to get out immediately, if possible. At about 9,000 feet I knew I could make the beach so I salved the bombs and had the men prepared for crash landing.

I picked the best spot on the beach for the landing and made my approach. The wind direction was approximately from [unclear] degrees. I made my [unclear] as much into the wind as I could judge and turned on the final [unclear] of the beach which gave me approximately a heading of [unclear] degrees. Because of the crosswind I did not use any flaps in case I should roll it on angle. My airspeed was about 140 and when about 10 feet from the ground I cut all [unclear], holding until a stalling result at which time I held the plane a bit nose high and then the plane hit. I went ahead about 150 feet until it stopped. The men without hesitation came out of their various escape hatches.

[Signed] HENRY J. SMITH, 1st Lt., A.C., Plane Commander, Crew 74.

41-28520 | 1943-11-28

STATEMENT
TO: Whom it may concern.

We had a normal climb to 20,000 feet. After about 20 minutes of high altitude firing I noticed the instruments flickering. I called the engineer out of the upper turret to check the generators which proved to be out or “dead”. Before we could start the Put Put the electrical system failed completely. Number 1 engine then started to run away. We tried to feather the prop but it would not feather. At 12,000 feet we were all prepared to bail out but the fire in number 1 engine was no worse so we prepared for a crash landing instead. We brought her in parallel with the beach and because of bad cross wind we used no flaps. We slid about 150 feet and got out as quickly as possible.

[Signed] HOWARD J. HELFNER, 2nd Lt., Air Corps, Co-pilot.
[Handwritten INCL. #4.]

41-28520 | 1943-11-28

STATEMENT
TO: Whom it may concern.

On 28th November 1943 we took off in Air plane AAF #520, our mission was high altitude bombing and gunnery. I was in the nose compartment with the bombardier when we started to lose altitude. We were flying at 20,000 ft in area #2 about 25 miles east of Cobb Island. The interphone system was out and I could not call the pilot to find out why we were losing altitude. At 13,000 feet [reading uncertain] I removed my oxygen mask, put on my parachute and crawled up on the flight deck. When I reached the deck I saw that the engineer and radio man were putting on there chutes. I found out that the electric system was out. I then helped to unload the ammunition by throwing it overboard. The pilot then ordered us to prepare for a crash landing. The plane landed and the entire crew cleared the ship without injury.

[Signed] JOSEPH GROSS, 2nd Lt., Air Corps, Navigator, Crew #74.
[Handwritten INCL. #5.]

41-28520 | 1943-11-28

STATEMENT
TO: Whom it may concern.

On the 28th November 1943 after a normal take-off in airplane AAF# 520 we reached 20,000 feet for our bombing runs. I took my position in the nose of the ship to prepare for our bombing runs. My sight was not working properly so I went back to check the voltage and frequency normally our armorer would have checked it for me but our interphone system was out. The frequency was 275 and the voltage 85 so after talking to the pilot I switch converters from #1 to #2. After doing this I returned to check the readings again and found them to be lower so returned to the pilot and told him there would be no bombing today. We then headed for the gunnery range. About 20 minutes we began a rapid descent but I remained in the nose the navigator left the nose for the flight deck. When we got to 10,000 feet I removed my mask then I stood up and looked back at the pilot and the co-pilot, they then motioned to me to leave the nose I went back to the flight deck and gave the order to salvo the bombs and then went to the waist.

I gave the order to put on chutes and then we proceeded to throw overboard everything loose of any weight. We then took our places at up against the armor plate and waited for the crash. After the landing we got out of the ship as quick as possible.

[Signed] FRANK B. RANDALL, 2nd Lt. Air Corps, Bombardier, Crew #74.
[Handwritten INCL. #6.]

41-28520 | 1943-11-28

STATEMENT
TO: Whom it may concern.

On 28 November 1943 we took off in airplane AAF# 520, to do a bombing and gunnery mission. We got to 20,000 feet and headed out over Area #2 to bomb on the Cape Charles bombing range. I then went back to fire my guns, but the turret was out because it was not getting any power. I then went back and told the other gunners that my turret was out, about this time Lt. RANDALL came back and told us to put on our chutes. We then began throwing out everything that was not fastened down. We got into our positions for landing and waited for the crash. After the ship had stoped we got out of it as quickly as possible.

[Signed] BEN G. OWEN, Sgt. Air Corps, AAG, Crew 74.
Sworne to on this date of 4 December 1943.
[Signed] PAUL W. NEFF, 1st Lt., Air Corps, Adjutant.
[Handwritten INCL. #7.]

41-28520 | 1943-11-28

STATEMENT
TO: Whom it may concern.

On 28 November 1943 we took off in airplane AAF #520, to do a high Altitude bombing and gunnery mission. We then climbed to 20,000 feet and leveled off. After telling the other men to take there place at there guns I took my place watching for other planes. After firing about 30 rounds we got orders to put out [reading uncertain].

At about 15,000 feet #1 engine started acting up. We then were ordered to prepare for a crash landing. We then salvoed the bombs and threw out everything that was loose and that had any weight to it. Then #2 engine started acting up. Lt. SMITH then headed for an island and we got set for the crash. The plane landed and was cleared immediately.

[Signed] DUANE D. BUSH, S/Sgt., Air Corps, Crew #74, Arm. Gunner.
Sworn to on this date of December 1943.
[Signed] PAUL W. NEFF, 1st Lt., Air Corps, Adjutant.

41-28520 | 1943-11-28

STATEMENT
TO: Whom it may concern.

When we went out to the ship on Sunday, November 28, 1943, the ground crew chief told me that they had installed three new generators in the plane since the night before. Thinking the ship was in good condition, I felt as usual on the take off.

Immediately after take off we began our climb to 20,000 feet. Everything seemed normal during the entire climb. Soon after we reached 20,000 feet, Lt. SMITH gave the order to start firing. I was firing out the right waist window, and had fired about 25 rounds, when all at once I was thrown against the rear bulkhead. I noticed that we were losing altitude so I put on my parachute. The interphone system was out so Lt. SMITH sent Sgt. Murray back to tell us what was wrong, and to put on our chutes.

At about 15,000 feet #1 engine began to smoke. I looked on the other side and #3 was smoking also. When we got down to about 5,000 feet flames begin to come from #1. For a minute I thought about bailing with fear of it blowing up. Then we got the order from Lt. SMITH to prepare for ditching. I was so busy then throwing ammunition over board that I didn't have time to think about jumping.

When we made our last turn I saw the land, and I knew then that we were going to make a crash landing instead of a ditching. I was so busy then throwing ammunition over board that I didn't think about jumping. We braced ourself against it (bulkhead) and I may state that it was very smooth under the circumstances.

After having time to think over all that happened and knowing the conditions of the plane, I know that Lt. SMITH did a fine job and may I say, "I don't think any other pilot could have done a better job."

[Signed] JAMES L. CATT, Sgt., Air Corps, Asst. Eng.
Sworne to on this date of 4 December 1943.
[Signed] PAUL W. NEFF, 1st Lt., Air Corps, Adjutant.

41-28520 | 1943-11-28

STATEMENT
TO: Whom it may concern.

On 28th November 1943 we took off in ship 520, our mission was high altitude bombing and gunnery. We had our oxygen masks on from 10,000 feet on up. We got up to 20,000, then the pilot signaled me to get into the top turret and fire the guns, to see if we had any malfunctions. I fired about 100 rounds and everything was going ok. We were at 20,000 for about 15 minutes, when the radio operator signaled me to come down out of the turret, because the instruments were out. I found the failure to be in the electrical power system. I got number four generator to working, and got the instruments back in. We had a very high surge of manifold pressure, that looked like an indication of a run away turbo. We decreased manifold pressure but to no advantage. I got number 3 and 4 engines to slow down by using the prop governor switches, but when the switches were released the props took off again. We were loosing altitude very rapidly. I gave the radio man instructions to put on his chutes on and warn the men in the waist, but they were on the ball and had their chutes on and were throwing everything out the windows that they found loose. We found that it may be better to take the ship in on it’s belly, rather than bailing out. I salvoed the bombs at about 8,000 feet. Lt. SMITH headed for the nearest beach and we got prepared for the crash. Pilot and Co-pilot were at the controls, myself the Navigator and radio man were up against the armor plate on the flight deck. The rest of the crew were in the waist against the front bulk head, and squeezed together so as to cushion the shock of landing. We hit the beach at 15:20, and skid for 50 or 60 yards. The ship was cleared immediately.

[Signed] DUANE S. VANCE, S/Sgt., Air Corps, Crew #74, 1st Engineer.
Sworne to on this date of 3 December 1943.
[Signed] PAUL W. NEFF, 1st Lt., Air Corps, Adjutant.
[Handwritten enclosure number partly obscured.]

41-28520 | 1943-11-28

STATEMENT
TO: Whom it may concern.

On November 28, 1943, we were assigned to plane 520. Our mission was to do high altitude bombing and gunnery. Take off time was approximately 1400. The engineer and I were the first to arrive at the plane before take off. As usual we made the required preflight inspections. On the evening of November 27, we had flown the same ship and because of electrical failure were forced to land before our mission was complete. Therefore we were especially critical when we checked the electrical system. Everything checked to our satisfaction. We had only three generators, but of course we were confident that three would be sufficient for our mission. I took my position for take off and we were soon in the air. After take off I again checked the generators and made [illegible] check on each engine. [Illegible] was in good order. I then assisted the armorer gunner in removing the pins from our practice bombs and told the bombardier the pins were removed. By this time we were gaining altitude and I decided to take my position at a waist window. I proceeded to put on my flying clothes, parachute harness and oxygen mask. By this time the other fellows were already using oxygen so I knew that we were above 10,000 feet. I connected myself to the oxygen outlet and decided to relax until we reached 20,000 feet. However my oxygen mask was leaking terribly so I was quite busy trying to refit the mask. With the aid of the tail gunner I managed to stop the leak. It was now time to fire the guns so I swung the waist gun into position and proceeded to fire a few rounds. The bombardier came to the rear of the airplane [illegible]. The tailgunner hadn't come to his gun position yet so I was attempting to call his attention to something [illegible]. The tailgunner also hadn't come to his gun position yet [reading uncertain]. I couldn't get out of the waist and before he was able to finish I knew things weren't just right.

The noise of the engines [illegible]. I had just [illegible] to the flight deck, when the radio operator came back and said to prepare for bailing out. I still didn't know exactly what was wrong. We were loosing altitude rapidly. So I decided the best thing to do was to fasten up on my parachute and ask questions later. Being over water I decided too that I should unfasten my flying equipment so it would be easy to remove if we were forced to bailout in water. I had the Gibson girl (emergency radio) placed at the waist window and the cord was fastened to the gun mount. [Illegible] we would have thrown it out in hopes that someone would be able to find it in the water. For a while I thought I might take off my heavy equipment and parachute and go up to see if I could assist the engineer. Before I could decide [illegible] we were now below [illegible] feet. We were miles away out over water and it didn't seem we'd be near any islands. I saw the bomb bay doors open and the practice bombs drop away. Everybody seemed busy doing something. We had several boxes of ammunition so we dropped them overboard in hopes of lightening our load. Lightening our load helped us reach the beach some minutes later [illegible]. From approximately [illegible] feet I kept my eye on No. 1 engine. It was smoking heavily and the prop was running away. About the turbo supercharger I could see small flames trying to break through. I watched this all the way down and wondered if we could pull out before the anticipated explosion.

Suddenly I realized we were too low to bail out. I knew then that our pilot had decided on either a water or beach landing. Which later proved a wise [illegible]. Our interphone within the ship had been dead all this time. [Illegible] in the tail just seemed to sense what to do. We had received some [illegible] procedure through our ground school training. Some of us had thought much about it at the time but actually when things so happened [illegible]. We all braced ourselves against No. 6 bulkhead or rear of bomb bay. That is the bombardier, assistant armorer gunner, and myself. The other members were stationed on the flight deck. The crew members in the tail didn't know whether we were landing on the beach or in the water.

[Statement continues on the next scan. Several lines are severely faded.]

41-28520 | 1943-11-28

[Continuation of Robert D. Ingalls's statement.]

All power was apparently lost and we were just so gliding in. It seemed like hours that [illegible] but actually it was minutes. I knew as soon as we hit the ground that there was no need for the emergency radio. So as soon as the plane came to a stop on the beach I immediately went out the right waist window followed by the others. The armorer gunner remembered to take the fire extinguisher as he left the ship. No one was in sight from the flight deck yet so we all started that way to see if everyone was alright. Before we reached there the pilot came through the escape hatch followed by the co-pilot, radioman, navigator, and engineer. No. 2 engine was still running, however it had [illegible] propeller and sounded more like an automobile than a plane. Realizing the possibility of explosion the whole crew hurried away from the wrecked ship. We were all checking each other at the [illegible] to find out if anybody was injured. We were all grateful that no one had scratch. Sometime later we went back to inspect the plane and decide what should be done. No doubt the plane is beyond repair. Why we didn't bail out is still an unanswered question. Had we bailed out no doubt the rescue would have been a difficult problem with ten men scattered around in the bay. So I conclude by saying it certainly paid to stay with the ship and keep the crew together.

[Signed] ROBERT D. INGALLS, S/Sgt., Air Corps, Crew 74, Ass't Engineer.
Sworne to on this date of 4 December 1943.
[Signed] PAUL W. NEFF, 1st Lt., Air Corps, Adjutant.

41-28520 | 1943-11-28

STATEMENT
TO: Whom it may concern.

We took off and went to 20,000 feet. At 20,000 feet I signed off [reading uncertain] to fire the waist guns. I was watching out the front when the pilot signaled me to go get the 1st engineer, who was in the top turret. The 1st engineer signaled the pilot to go down then signaled to me to go to the rear to tell the boys to put on their parachutes. They were putting them on at the time. We were losing altitude fast and I opened the bomb bay doors and the 1st engineer salvoed the bombs. The boys in the back starting throwing the ammunition out the bomb bay doors.

Then we prepared for ditching. I closed the flight deck doors and got into position. The 1st engineer had his back to the bullet proof plating then the navigator then myself. I had to hold the [illegible] of the top turret because I couldn't clasp it shut. The bomb bay doors were open when we hit. I believe it was a good thing they were because they helped us from sliding so far.

[Signed] VICTOR E. MURRAY, Sgt., Air Corps, Radio man, Crew 74.
Sworne to on this date 4 December 1943 [day reading uncertain].
[Signed] PAUL W. NEFF, 1st Lt., Air Corps, Adjutant.

41-28520 | 1943-11-28

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES
OFFICE OF FLYING SAFETY
WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA
FOR ACTION AIU. FOR INFO OFC MGMT. FOR FILE M&R.
DATE 29 NOV. 1943. [T.W.X. checked.]
[Handwritten: B-24E. Other handwritten marks partly illegible.]

WSAL 361 V AT 393 ATB NR 2 WD..
WA 24.. ATX V WHE NR 5..
FROM COAB LANGLEY FIELD VIR VIA HRPOE NEWPORTNEWS VA NOV 29 0125Z..
TO CHIEF FLYING SAFETY NISSEN BLDG.. WINSTON SALEM NC..
PAGE ONE/100.. GR 185..

B642 AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT PERIOD..
A. TWO EIGHT NOVEMBER ONE FIVE TWO NAUGHT EWT COBB ISLAND VA..
B. PILOT HENRY J SMITH FIRST LIEUTENANT AIR CORPS RES FIRST AIR FORCE CMA FOUR FIVE FIVE BOMB GROUP CMA LANGLEYFIELD VA..
C. CRASH LANDING CMA POWER FAILURE..
D. PILOT NO INJURY CMA COPILOT HOWARD J HELFNER SECOND LT AUS CMA NAVIGATOR JOSEPH GROSS SECOND LT AUS CMA BOMBADIER FRANK B RANDALL SECOND LT AUS CMA AERIAL ENGINEER DUANE S VANCE STAFF SERGEANT AUS CMA AAAT ENGINEER ROBERT D INGALLS STAFF SERGEANT AUS CMA RADIO OPERATOR VICTOR E MURRAY SERGEANT AUS CMA ASST RADIO OPERATOR JAMES L CATT [SERGEANT, overtyped] AUS CMA AERIAL GUNNER DUANE D BUSH STAFF SERGEANT AUS CMA AERIAL GUNNER BEN G OWEN SERGEANT AUS CMA ALL OF FIRST AF CMA NO INJURY..
E. LOCAL FLIGHT CMA ROUTINE TRAINING MISSION..
F. CEILING UNLIMITED VISIBILITY SIX MILES IN HAZE SURFACE WINDS SEVEN MILES FROM NORTH EAST..
G. FOUR ONE DASH TWO EIGHT FIVE TWO NAUGHT CMA B DASH TWO FOUR E..
H. AAB LANGLEYFIELD VA..
I. COMPLETE WRECK..
CONTINUED PAGE TWO..
[Handwritten: 44-11-28-7, as written.]

41-28520 | 1943-11-28

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES
OFFICE OF FLYING SAFETY
WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA
FOR ACTION AIU. FOR INFO OFC MGMT. FOR FILE M&R.
DATE 29 NOV. 1943. [T.W.X. checked.]

CONTINUED PAGE TWO..
J. UNKNOWN..
K. SALVAGE..
L. NONE..
M. AFACG NOTIFIED..
BT 0222Z..
#2.
PS..

41-29267 | 1944-01-06

WAR DEPARTMENT — U.S. ARMY AIR FORCES
REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[CONFIDENTIAL struck through. RESTRICTED stamped.]
(1) Place: Eknes Field, Dkr [abbreviation faint]. (2) Date: 6 January 1944. (3) Time: 0630.
(4) Type: B-24 H. (5) A.F. No.: 41-29267.
(7–9) 15 AF, AAF | 455 BG | 743 BS.

PERSONNEL
Duty | Name | Serial no. | Rank | Result
P | BRUNSON, Clyde P. | O684263 | 2nd Lt. | None
CP | MOLNAR, Atlas M. | O795425 | 2nd Lt. | None
N | BIGELOW, Robert E. | O811520 | 2nd Lt. | Injured
B | PARKER, William C., Jr. | O752355 | 2nd Lt. | Injured
E | POWERS, Arthur R. | 39089889 [reading uncertain] | S/Sgt. | Injured
R | RUANE, Eugene P. | 13157683 [reading uncertain] | S/Sgt. | None
AE | JOHNSON, Thomas E., Jr. | 17161901 | Sgt. | Injured
AR | SCHULZ, Elmer G. | 35320472 [reading uncertain] | Sgt. | Injured
AG | CASTAGNOLI, Louis J. A. | 39039761 [reading uncertain] | Cpl. | Killed
AG | MOORE, Wesley E. | 18088149 [reading uncertain] | Sgt. | None
X | TRANZELAS, Paul C. [reading uncertain] | [unclear] | Sgt. | Injured
X | ANDERSON, Arnold M. | 31117716 [reading uncertain] | S/Sgt. | Killed
X | BUCHANAN, Cordell | 20918602 [reading uncertain] | T/Sgt. | Injured
X | PRZYBYLSKI, Bernard J. | 32379552 [reading uncertain] | T/Sgt. | Injured
[Branch AC and command 15 AF throughout. Parachute column No throughout. Several personnel classes and ratings are faint or overwritten.]

(20–24) BRUNSON, Clyde P.; O-684263; 2nd Lt.; 18; AC.
(25–32) Assigned: 15 AF, AAF; 455 BG; 743 BS. Attached: 15th AF, AAF; 455 BG. [Remaining fields faint.]
(33–37) Pilot, 26 June 1943; Pilot, 26 June 1943; instrument rating 25 Oct 1943.
(38–41) First pilot hours: 225; 70; 70; 600. [Other entries faint.]
(46–48) Damage entries: W, W, W.
(50) CAVU. (51) No.
(52–55) Dakar, Senegal, F.W.A.; Marrakech, French Morocco; Instrument; Joining Bombardment Group.
(56) Aircraft was pulled off ground and command given to retract gear.
(57) Aircraft was apparently pulled off the ground and command given to retract gear. Aircraft apparently settled and props struck the steel mat, nose wheel and left gear collapsed. When the wheels touched the ground, apparently the brakes were applied. The airplane skid for a distance of one thousand five hundred (1500′) feet, reversed its position and burned.

41-29267 | 1944-01-06

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENTS

On 6 January 1944, at 0630 hours, Lt. BRUNSON, took-off Eknes Field for Marrakech. After attaining take-off speed, the landing gear was retracted. Aircraft apparently settled and the props struck the steel mat, nose wheel and left gear collapsed. When the wheels touched the ground, apparently the brakes were applied. The airplane skid for a distance of one thousand five hundred (1500′) feet, reversed its direction and burned.

FINDINGS OF THE ACCIDENT INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE:

The accident was caused by Pilot error.
More training in cockpit procedure on take-off be given to all four engine crews. That emphasis be placed on the fact that the Pilot must be sure the aircraft is airborne before giving the command “GEAR UP”.

[Signatures and typed names]
WALTER E. YINGLING, Major, Medical Corps, Ex. Of. Member.
EVERETT O. NEWMAN, Major, Air Corps, President.
FRED H. SATTLER, Captain, Air Corps, Member.
ENSLEE A. HOPPER [first name uncertain], Major, Air Corps, Ex. Of. Member.
NORRIS PIERSON [reading uncertain], 1st Lt., Air Corps, Recorder.
RAYMOND V. PENDERGAST, Captain, Air Corps, Member.
CURTIS A. KERR, Colonel, Air Corps, Member.

41-29267 | 1944-01-06

[Dark copy of Robert E. Bigelow’s statement, printed page 1. The next scan reproduces the same questions and answers more clearly. The transcription under consolidated scan page 31 applies to both copies. Classification stamps: RESTRICTED.]

41-29267 | 1944-01-06

Statement of 2ND LT. ROBERT E. BIGELOW, O811520 AC, 743 Bombardment Squadron, 455 Bombardment Group, 15th Air Force, Navigator of B-24H #41-29267.

Q. What are your duties?
A. Navigator.

Q. What was your position during take-off of the airplane?
A. I was on the flight deck.

Q. At the time the aircraft was apparently in trouble did you think you were in the air or still on the ground?
A. I felt we were still on the ground.

Q. When did you notice the left wing drop, or anything abnormal?
A. As soon as the nose started to drop we started to take off. I don't know whether the wing fell down or not.

Q. Were there a few seconds of time between the moment you felt you were taking off and before the wing hit, or before the first contact with the ground, such as scraping on the runway, or did you notice something that was not normal?
A. It felt as though we were going up on the nose. Then we took off. I could feel ourselves leave the ground. I thought we came back down. The next sensation seemed to me as though we were over on that wing. I don't know when we went on that wing. I felt first the nose gave way and then the left wing.

Q. Did you hear the pilot give the command "Gears up"?
A. No sir.

Q. You don't know whether the co-pilot actually pulled the gear lever or not?
A. No.

Q. Did you see any fire about the airplane other than the normal exhaust from the engines before the airplane came to its final rest?
A. Yes. Before we finally stopped sliding one of the engines was on fire. The engine on the left side, I think it would be the No. 2 engine.

Q. How did you get out, through the top hatch?
A. Yes, I pushed the other Lieutenant out.

Q. Did you at any time see the two boys who were killed?
A. No.

[Printed page 1. RESTRICTED.]

41-29267 | 1944-01-06

[Robert E. Bigelow statement, continued.]

Q. Then you don’t know whether they were pinned under the wreckage or not?
A. No sir. We heard screaming.

Q. After you got out of the airplane, did you notice the position of the gear, or the position of the airplane, whether one wing was high, or was it just normally flat on the ground?
A. It looked like the nose was up.

[Signed] ROBERT E. BIGELOW, 2nd Lt. AC.
[RESTRICTED stamped over earlier classification.]

41-29267 | 1944-01-06

Statement of 2ND LT. WILLIAM C. PARKER, JR., O752355, 743 Bombardment Squadron, 455 Bombardment Group, Bombardier on B-24H #41-29267.

Q. What are your duties?
A. I am the bombardier.

Q. So far as take-off and the condition of the airplane, you have none of those responsibilities?
A. No sir.

Q. Did you notice during the take-off anything other than the normal condition of the aircraft?
A. No, I did not, until we heard the tail hit.

Q. What was your position in the airplane?
A. I was sitting behind the pilot, behind the seat on the line approximately one foot from the armor plate facing the inside of the ship.

Q. You were not in a position to see the air speed indicator?
A. No sir.

Q. Did you feel that the airplane was flying at any time on the take-off, or did it seem as though you were constantly on the ground?
A. We thought we got off. It seemed as though we were going fast enough for it.

Q. Did you notice any fire in the airplane or engines other than the normal exhaust, prior to the time the aircraft stopped at its final destination?
A. I think No. 1 or No. 2 engine was on fire. Before we finally stopped I was aware of it because I could see the reflection out of the window.

Q. How did you get out of the plane?
A. By the top escape hatch. [Partly obscured by scan line.]

Q. Did you at any time see the two boys who were killed?
A. No sir.

Q. You don’t know whether they were pinned underneath the wreckage or not?
A. No sir.

Q. Were you able to get out of the aircraft without assistance?
A. I needed assistance. I got halfway up the hatch and the navigator pushed me the rest of the way.

[Printed page 1. RESTRICTED.]

41-29267 | 1944-01-06

[William C. Parker, Jr., statement, continued.]

Q. After you got out of the airplane, did you notice whether the gear was extended or not.
A. After I got out of the airplane I was dazed and the only thing I noticed was the right wing. The Crew Chief told me to get away from there on account of fire.

[Signed] WILLIAM C. PARKER, JR, 2nd Lt., Air Corps.
RESTRICTED.

41-29267 | 1944-01-06

Statement of S/Sgt Arthur R. Powers, 39089889 [reading uncertain], 743 Bombardment Squadron, 455 Bombardment Group, Engineer on B-24H #41-29267.

Q. What are your duties?
A. I am the Engineer.

Q. Did you make the run-up, the pre-flight or witness the pre-flight?
A. The pilot did it and I was right there.

Q. Did you notice any malfunctioning or operations that were not normal?
A. No sir.

Q. Instruments?
A. Normal.

Q. Was the airplane run up on the blocks? Did they run up the engines on the blocks before they taxied down?
A. Yes sir.

Q. Were the engines run up again before taking off?
A. Yes.

Q. Both run-ups of the airplane were normal?
A. Yes.

Q. What was your position when the take off was started?
A. Between the pilot and co-pilot.

Q. When did you first notice that there was something wrong?
A. The only thing I noticed was that the left wing dropped. [Partly obscured by scan line.]

Q. About how high were you?
A. 6 or 8′ sir. [First figure faint.]

Q. Did you hear the pilot give the order for retracting the gear?
A. Yes sir.

Q. The co-pilot retracted the gear?
A. Yes sir.

Q. Was it shortly after that that the left wing went down?
A. The whole ship settled a bit before the wing caught.

[RESTRICTED stamped over earlier classification.]

41-29267 | 1944-01-06

[Arthur R. Powers statement, continued.]

Q. When the left wing went down, did you hear a lot of noise, like the propeller catching the tin mat?
A. Evidently the left wheel was unlocked, and when it went down it could not carry the weight. That is my interpretation.

Q. Did you feel the nose go over? You did not tip over?
A. No sir, only after the wing touched.

Q. Did the pilot apply the brakes?
A. I could not tell.

Q. You did not feel the shock?
A. No sir, it happened so quickly.

Q. Your left wing struck?
A. Yes.

Q. Then she slid on down the runway and made the turn?
A. Yes.

Q. You have a cockpit check list before taking over?
A. Yes sir.

Q. Was that gone through completely before taking off?
A. I suppose it was. It most generally is. I can’t say definitely about it that morning.

Q. They did not call out each list?
A. [Line obscured.] … in the right position.

Q. Sergeant, did you notice any fire about the airplane other than the normal exhaust before the airplane stopped at its final destination?
A. No sir.

Q. When the airplane stopped, where were you, in what part?
A. Well, I was right by the radio man, trying to [illegible].

Q. How did you get out of the aircraft?
A. I went out through the top escape hatch.

Q. Was your foot fast?
A. Yes sir. Several boys got out before I did.

41-29267 | 1944-01-06

[Arthur R. Powers statement, continued.]

Q. Did you have much trouble getting your foot extricated?
A. No. I jerked it two or three times. I just pulled it loose.

Q. Did you see the two men who were killed?
A. No sir, I did not see them at any time.

Q. You don’t know whether they were pinned under the wreckage or not?
A. No sir.

Q. Did you notice the air speed?
A. Yes sir, between 125 and 130 [figures faint]. I always watch it when we take off.

Q. When the wing touched, the co-pilot pulled the throttle back, which is the normal procedure?
A. Yes sir.

Q. What was the condition of your load, about a normal load to what you had been operating with?
A. Yes sir.

Q. You don’t feel there was an overload?
A. I am positive.

Q. Did you notice after you got out of the plane whether both landing gears were retracted?
A. No sir, I did not.

[Signed] Arthur R. Powers, S/Sgt., [serial faint].
Subscribed to and sworn before me this 8th day of January 1944 [day faint].
[Signed] Edward V. C. Nicol [reading uncertain], 1st Lt., AC, Summary Court Officer.

41-29267 | 1944-01-06

DAKAR CONTROL TOWER
ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE LOG
DATE 6 JANUARY 1944

EXTRACT
A.C. NO. | TYPE | TIME | REMARKS
9267 | B-24 | 0625 | TAXI INSTRUCTIONS - CLEARED
9267 | B-24 | 0633 | TAKE-OFF INSTRUCTIONS - CLEARED
[Asterisks between entries mark omitted log material.]

A TRUE EXTRACT:
NICHOLAS D. PINTAURO
1ST LT., AIR CORPS
[RESTRICTED stamped over earlier classification.]

41-29267 | 1944-01-06

WAR DEPARTMENT — AIR CORPS — FORM NO. 23
AIRCRAFT CLEARANCE
Flight Identification No. 3735 [reading uncertain].
Operations Office: EKNES FIELD. Date: 1-5-44. Address: DAKAR, SENEGAL.
B-24 | 41-29267 | 743 Sq., 455 Gp., 15 AF.

NAME AND RANK OF CREW AND OTHER OCCUPANTS
BRUNSON, Lt.; MOLNAR, Lt.; BIGELOW, Lt.; PARKER, Lt.
POWERS, S/Sgt.; RUANE, S/Sgt.; SCHULZ, Sgt.; CASTAGNOLI, Cpl.; BUCHANAN, T/Sgt.
TRANZELAS, Sgt.; JOHNSON, Sgt.; MOORE, Sgt.; PRZYBYLSKI, T/Sgt.; ANDERSON, S/Sgt.

To THIES via Direct at 5000 CFR.
To MARRAKECH via Direct at 9000 CFR.
Destination MARRAKECH. [Figures in adjoining boxes: 160, 4495, 6210, 4595, 5662; labels partly faint.]
Proposed take-off: 0630. Estimated time en route: 8 hours. [Fuel figure faint.] Radio: [entries partly illegible.]
Briefing officer: s/ Fred H. Sattler, Captain, AC.

Thorough consideration has been given by the pilot to the Necessary Maps, Emergency Equipment, Notices to Airmen, and Weather Conditions affecting the proposed flight. The pilot is familiar with local flight rules and regulations and those of the Civil Aeronautics Administration.
WEATHER: C checked. [Forecast and winds-aloft fields without clear entries.]
A TRUE COPY: EVERETT O. NEWMAN, Major, Air Corps, Base Operations Officer.
s/ F. A. Fend [reading uncertain], 1st Lt., AC. s/ Clyde P. Brunson.
s/ Walter O'Keeffe, 1st Lt., AC.
DEPARTURE RECORD: s/ Brunson; B-24H, 41-29267.
[Remaining small print and a few marks are faint.]

41-29267 | 1944-01-06

[Hand-drawn runway diagram. Readable labels are reproduced below. Other measurements and words are faint.]

South End
West Edge of Mat
Left Wheel
Right Wheel
Brakes First Applied at This Point
1584.0′ [reading uncertain]
Nose wheel collapsed here.
Left motor cut mat [reading uncertain].
Wing tip hit near runway.
#3 engine prop.
Nose [illegible] made [illegible] contact here.
Left outboard motor broke loose here.
#1 engine prop also around rear of engine [reading uncertain].
East Edge-Mat
1.2 Miles
North-South Runway Steel Mat
NOTE SKETCH NOT TO SCALE.

RESTRICTED.

41-29267 | 1944-01-06

RESTRICTED
Army Air Forces
HEADQUARTERS, STATION #2
NORTH AFRICA WING
Air Transport Command

APO 622, Miami, Florida,
13 January 1944.

SUBJECT: Aircraft Accident Report of B-24H, Number 41-29267, Eknes Field, 6 January 1944.
TO: Commanding General, Army Air Forces, Washington, D.C.

1. Submitted herewith are the following in connection with subject aircraft accident:
a. AAF Form 14
b. Aircraft Clearance, AAF Form 23
c. Photographs
d. Statements of 12 crew members
e. Statement of 1st Lt. ROBERT P. SCOTT, Engineering Officer, Eknes Field
f. Statement of Post Utilities personnel
g. Dakar Tower Log
h. Sketch of Runway

2. Copies of this report have been submitted to the Commanding General, Air Transport Command, Assistant Chief of Staff, Operations, Air Transport Command, Commanding General, North Africa Wing, Commanding General, 15 Air Force, Air Force to which Pilot is assigned, and the Home Station of the aircraft.

For the Commanding Officer:
[Signed] EDWARD V. C. NICOL, 1st Lt., Air Corps, Acting Adjutant.

8 Incls:
Incl 1 - AAF Form 14
Incl 2 - AAF Form 23
Incl 3 - Photographs
Incl 4 - Statements of crew members
Incl 5 - Statement of Eng O
Incl 6 - Statement of Fire Dept personnel
Incl 7 - Tower Log
Incl 8 - Sketch
[Printed page 1.] RESTRICTED.

41-29267 | 1944-01-06

RESTRICTED
Army Air Forces
HEADQUARTERS, STATION #2
NORTH AFRICA WING
Air Transport Command

APO 622, Miami, Florida,
13 January 1944.

SUBJECT: Accident Report of B-24H, Number 41-29267, Eknes Field, 6 January 1944.
TO: Commanding General, Station #1, North Africa Wing, APO 396, U.S. Army.

1. Attached hereto are the following in connection with subject accident:
a. AAF Form 14 - 7 copies
b. Aircraft Clearance, AAF Form 23 - 7 copies
c. Photographs - 7 copies
d. Statements of 12 crew members - 7 copies each
e. Statement of 1st Lt. ROBERT P. SCOTT, Engineering Officer, Eknes Field - 7 copies
f. Statements of Post Utilities personnel - 7 copies each
g. Dakar Tower Log - 7 copies
h. Sketch of Runway - 7 copies
i. Letter of Transmittal - 3 copies

2. This report is submitted to your Station for forwarding to the proper Headquarters.

For the Commanding Officer:
[Signed] EDWARD V. C. NICOL, 1st Lt., Air Corps, Acting Adjutant.

9 Incls:
Incl 1 - AAF Form 14
Incl 2 - AAF Form 23
Incl 3 - Photographs
Incl 4 - Statements
Incl 5 - Statement of Eng O
Incl 6 - Statements of Fire Dept personnel
Incl 7 - Tower Log
Incl 8 - Sketch
Incl 9 - Ltr of Transmittal
[Printed page 1.] RESTRICTED.

41-29267 | 1944-01-06

[Photographic enclosure. Four views of the wreckage, detached propellers, and personnel at the crash site. Readable portions of captions: “No. 1 engine propeller”; “No. 4 engine”; “No. 4 propeller”; “WRECKAGE AFTER [illegible] EXTINGUISHED”; “FIREMEN [illegible]”. Classification stamps partly visible.]

41-29267 | 1944-01-06

[Photographic enclosure. Four views of the steel runway mat, marks across the runway, personnel standing on the mat, and wreckage. Readable portions of captions: “Cuts made by No. 1 engine [illegible]”; “STEEL MAT NECESSARY TO REPAIR RUNWAY”; “POINT OF LEFT WING CONTACT WITH RUNWAY”; “WHEEL MARK OF AIRCRAFT”; “PATH OF NOSE WHEEL”; “PATH OF RT. WHEEL”. Other labels are faint. CONFIDENTIAL and RESTRICTED stamps partly visible.]

42-52251 | 1944-01-14

WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. Form No. 14 (Revised May 12, 1943)
RESTRICTED [CONFIDENTIAL struck through]
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
Place: DJEDEIDA, TUNISIA. Date: Jan. 14, 1944. Time: 1340. [Stamped 229.]
Aircraft: B-24-H, A.C. No. 42-52251. Station: DJEDEIDA. Organization: 15th Air Force, 455th BG (H), 740th Bomb. Sq. (H).

PERSONNEL [duty, name, rating, serial, rank, personnel class, branch, command, result, parachute]
P — CALABRETTA, LOUIS; Plt.; O681329; 2nd Lt.; O-1; A.C.; 15th AF; M. Injury; None.
CP — PINNEY, WARREN; Co-Plt.; O808585; 2nd Lt.; O-1; A.C.; 15th AF; M. Injury [ditto]; No.
E — HINDON, FRED I.; E; 12208682; Sgt.; 36; A.C.; 15th AF; M. Injury [ditto]; No.
R — BISCHOFF, HERMAN J.; R; 35567641; Sgt.; 38; A.C.; 15th AF; No Injury; No.
X — BISCHOFF, FREDERICK E. [initial uncertain]; X; [blank]; Sgt.; 38; A.C.; 15th AF; M. Injury; No.
[Received stamp] MAY 23 1944.

FIRST PILOT — CALABRETTA, LOUIS; O681329; 2nd Lt.; O-1; Air Corps. Assigned 15th Air Force, 455th, 740th, DJEDEIDA. Original rating: Pilot, 5-24-43. Present rating: Pilot, 5-24-43.
Hours: This type 237:20; this model 83:15; last 90 days 186:20; total [struck through]. Instrument time last 6 months 40:00; last 30 days 2:00. Night time last 6 months 56:40; last 30 days 7:15.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Aircraft W; engine(s) W; propeller(s) W. A Complete Wreck.
Weather: CAVU. Flying on instruments: No. Cleared from DJEDEIDA to DJEDEIDA. Kind of clearance: Local.
Pilot’s mission: Test Flight.
Nature of accident: Never airborn on Take-Off.
Cause of accident: Controls Locked.
[Handwritten administrative marks and numerals in margins and over form.]

42-52251 | 1944-01-14

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT
(Brief narrative of accident. Include statement of responsibility and recommendations for action to prevent repetition)

Pilot's Statement:
Plane checked OK on ground. Run up Co-Pilot was in Pilot's seat. Co-Pilot noticed controls were locked when about half way down runway and called out "Controls are locked". I tried for a few seconds to unlock them, but couldn't do it, cut throttles, engine switches, main line, and braked the ship. We had approximately 1000 ft. of runway left and clear field in front. I eased on brakes; nose wheel collapsed upon hitting soft ground and plane flipped over.
[Signed] Louis Calabretta, Pilot.

Statement of Accident Classification Committee:
It is the boards opinion that the pilots statement is a true and acurate account of the accident.
It is believed that carelessness on the part of the pilot was the main cause, and failure to cut throttles immediately was an error of judgement.

[Signed] DAVID W. HARP, Major, AC; HUGH R. GRAFF, Major, AC; JAMES H. COSMAN, Captain, MC.
Date: Jan 16, 1944.

42-52251 | 1944-01-14

HEADQUARTERS
455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H),
APO 520, US ARMY
13 May 1944

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Records.
TO: Chief, Flying Safety, AAF, Winston-Salem 1, North Carolina.

In compliance with Part V, Par 1a, AAF Reg 62-14A, dated 28 Jan 1944, transmitted herewith is the AAF Form No 14, for aircraft accident which occurred on the date indicated.

For the Group Commander:
[Signed] HUGH R. GRAFF, Major, Air Corps, Operations Officer.
1 Incl - AAF Form No 14.

42-52251 | 1944-01-14

Accident No. 44-1-14-52[illegible]
Checked by [initials uncertain], Date 5-26-44.
Analyzed by [blank]. Copied for Wright Field by [blank]. Notes [blank].
1225:9-43

42-52247 | 1944-04-06

WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. Form No. 14 (Revised May 12, 1943)
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Classification stamp struck through.] 44-4-6-516 [handwritten]; 128 [stamp].
Place: APO 520, U. S. Army. Date: 6 April 1944. Time: 1630.
Aircraft: B-24H, A.F. No. 42-52247. Station: San Giovanna [as typed]. Organization: 15th AF, 455th, 741st Bomb Sq.

PERSONNEL [duty, name, rating, serial, rank, class, branch, command, result, parachute]
P — PAIGE, BENJAMIN (NMI); P; O742518; 2nd Lt.; 01; AC; 15th; Death; No.
CP — CURTIS, JOHN F.; P; O806969; 1st Lt.; 01; AC; 15th; Death; No.
N — Picken, Donald J.; N; O753023; 2nd Lt.; 01; AC; 15th; Injury; No.
E — RICKEY, JOHN W.; E; 16016969; T/Sgt.; 20; AC; 15th; Death; No.
R — CORRIDDI, FEDERICO G.; R; 32550193; T/Sgt.; 20; AC; 15th; Injury; No.
X — WATTERS, ELMER E.; BO; O873014; 1st Lt.; 01; AC; 15th; Death; No.
X — KENNEDY, HERMAN L.; —; 38271527; Cpl.; 99; MC; 15th; Death; No.
X — KRIPPLEBAUER, JOHN; —; 38489255; Cpl.; 99; MC; 15th; Death; No.
X — ROBERTS, LESTER V.; —; 39325108; Cpl.; 99; AC; 15th; Injury; No.
X — LOWE, CHARLES C.; —; [obscured]033902; T/4; 99; Eng; 15th; Injury; No.
X — YAKIMICK, FRANCIS L.; —; 20304465; Cpl.; 99; SS; 15th; Injury; No.
FIRST PILOT — PAIGE, BENJAMIN (NMI); O742518; 2nd Lt.; 18; A.C. Assigned: 15th AF, 455th, 741st Bomb Sq., APO 520. Original and present rating: P, 4/12/43. Instrument rating: No.
Hours: This type 8:45; this model 8:45; last 90 days 8:45; total 8:45 [struck through]. Instrument and night time: dashes.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Aircraft 5, completely demolished. Engines 5, 5, 5, 5, all demolished and burned. Propellers 5, 5, 5, 5, damaged beyond repair.
Weather: Scattered stratocumulus bases three (3) thousand tops six (6) thousand. Visibility unlimited. Flying on instruments: No. Cleared from San Giovanni to San Giovanni. Clearance: V.O.C.O.
Pilot’s mission: Engineering test hop and co-pilot transition.
Nature: Airplane stalled into ground from a low altitude.
Cause: Pilot feathered both out-board engines at an altitude of 1500 feet above the terrain. Power was not increased on in-board engines sufficiently to maintain level flight. An attempt to unfeather engines was made but not in time to prevent loss of considerable altitude and airspeed. Before power could be gained from unfeathered engines the airplane stalled approximately 50 feet before the ground.
[Handwritten] Incl: 1.

42-52247 | 1944-04-06

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

After shooting three landings in a combination test flight and transition flight, Lt. CURTIS flew south of the home airdrome about 15 miles and at an altitude of about 2000 feet above mean sea level proceeded to demonstrate 2 engine operation to a co-pilot, Lt. PAIGE. Lt. CURTIS was in the co-pilots seat when he feathered #4 engine. About one minute later #1 engine was feathered and very little, if any, additional power above normal cruising was applied to the remaining engines. After losing about 800 feet from the original altitude #1 engine was unfeathered and an attempt to unfeather #4 was made, but in the mean time the airplane was in a stall and power could not be brought in quickly enough with the remaining altitude to prevent stalling into the ground and burning.

It is the opinion of the board the full cause of this accident was due to poor judgement on the part of the pilot, Lt. CURTIS. No evidence whatsoever of material failure was found.

The pilot had read and understood the Pilots Information File in regards to practice feathering propellers not lower than 5000 feet above the terrain.

[Signed] DAVID W. HARP JR., Major, AC; JACK D. REEDER, Major, AC; HORACE W. LANFORD, JR., Major, AC.
Date: 9 April 1944. [Received stamp] MAY 20 1944.

42-52247 | 1944-04-06

CONFIDENTIAL
AFFIDAVIT
Before me, the undersigned, authority for administering oaths, appeared one, Cpl. Francis L. Yakimick, ASN 20304465, being duly sworn, deposes and says regarding the crash of B-24H Aircraft No. 42-52247 on 6 April 1944:

“We took off well, climbed up to about 2000 feet and everything was smooth. I wasn’t paying much attention but we were dropping lower. They feathered No. 4 but I didn’t pay much attention. Later they feathered No. 1 and it started to vibrate and I began to worry because we were getting lower. We still had between 300 and 500 feet when he put them back on. I looked out and there was the ground at 25 feet. I grabbed for a machine gun to brace myself and we hit. The plane cracked in the middle and I woke up on the ground about 15 feet away. It exploded just as I crawled away from it.

“The tail was dragging and was vibrating sideways. The left wing-tip and fusilage hit at the same time. The landing speed was about 130 when we hit I think.”

Further deponent sayeth Not:
[Signed] Cpl. Francis L. Yakimick, ASN 20304465.
Sworn and subscribed before me this 15th day of April, 1944.
[Signed] DAVID W. HARP Jr., Major, Air Corps, Dep. Gp. Commander.
[Handwritten] Incl 2.
CONFIDENTIAL

42-52247 | 1944-04-06

CONFIDENTIAL
AFFIDAVIT
Before me, the undersigned, authority for administering oaths, appeared one, T/Sgt Federico G. Corriddi, ASN 32550193, being duly sworn, deposes and says regarding the crash of B-24H Aircraft No. 42-52247 on 6 April 1944:

“We were to start at 2:30. We had to change a rudder on it. I don’t know who shot the first landing but it was very rough. Lt. CURTIS thought he would check out the co-pilot. We feathered No. 4 at 2500 feet. Right afterwards we feathered No. 1 and started losing altitude. We were still losing altitude when the engineer told Lt. CURTIS we were going to crash. CURTIS tried to unfeather No. 4 but he didn’t make it. I must have been tossed out the fusilage.”

Further deponent sayeth not:
[Signed] T/Sgt. Federico G. Corriddi, ASN 32550193.
Sworn and subscribed before me this 15th day of April, 1944.
[Signed] DAVID W. HARP Jr., Major, Air Corps, Dep. Gp. Commander.
CONFIDENTIAL

42-52221 | 1944-04-20

WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. Form No. 14 (Revised May 12, 1943)
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
Place: San Giovanni Air Field. Date: 20 April 1944. Time: 1000.
Aircraft: B-24H, A.F. No. 42-52221. Station: APO 520, US ARMY. Organization: 15th, 455th Bomb GP, 740th Bomb Sq. (H).

PERSONNEL [name, rating, serial, rank]
BETHUNE, JOHN L.; P; O-795345; 1st Lt.
ADKISSION, WILLIAM R. [as typed]; CP; O-691029; 2nd Lt.
ABRAMOWITZ, MURRAY; N; O-811499; 2nd Lt.
AUSTIN, JAMES P.; B; O-688297; 2nd Lt.
BOON, CLAUD J.; E; 14150464; T/Sgt.
RILEY, PRICE O.; R; 15339957; T/Sgt.
BROWN, HARRY L.; G; 11105136; S/Sgt.
VICK, GOLDMAN W.; G; 14158528; S/Sgt.
FISHER, JOHN T.; BTG; 33501974; Sgt.
FOWLER, LAURENCE G.; WG; 17125262; Sgt.
[AC and 15th throughout. Officers class 01. Enlisted class entries overwritten in pencil. Result column crossed by a single line, parachute column blank.]

FIRST PILOT — BETHUNE, JOHN L.; O-795345; 1st Lt.; 01; AC. Assigned: 15th, 455th, 740th, APO 520 U.S. ARMY. Instrument rating date: 16 Oct. 43.
Hours: This type 242:40; this model 127:25; last 90 days 57:05; total 427:10.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Aircraft, engine(s), propeller(s): Class 26, Class 26, Class 26.
Weather: C.A.V.U. Flying on instruments: No. Cleared from San Giovanni A/D; To: Return. Clearance: VOCO.
Pilot’s mission: Combat.
Nature: Airplane stalled and crashed from very low altitude.
Cause: Flaps were retracted and power reduced while in a stalling turn.

42-52221 | 1944-04-20

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

The ship made a nose high take-off on a combat mission and wheels were immediately retracted followed by flaps being retracted and power reduced. The airplane was observed by a member of this board never to have exceeded an altitude of 100 feet and never appeared to recover from a stalling position. About 30 seconds after take-off the airplane was put into a 15° bank and from this attitude it mushed back into the ground and crashed. Flaps were never re-extended nor was full power re-applied before the crash.

The cause of this accident is 100% percent attributed to pilot error in technique and judgement. Recommend all pilots instructed never to retract flaps or go into a turn at an altitude less than 500 feet above the terrain.

[Signed] DAVID W. HARP JR., Major, AC; JACK D. REEDER, Major, AC; HORACE W. LANFORD, JR., Major, AC.
Date: 23 April 1944. [Received stamp] MAY 20 1944.

42-52221 | 1944-04-20

AFFIDAVIT
Before me, the undersigned, authority for administering oaths, appeared one, Capt. JAMES C. DOOLEY, being duly sworn, deposes and says regarding the crash of B-24H Aircraft No. 42-52221 on 20 April 1944:

“The ship after takeoff looked to have up flying speed. The wheels were up. The ship started a low turn to the right as he approached the 766th Sqdn tent area. The pilot seemed to pull up the nose. The ship gradually lost speed and was mushing, losing altitude. He then hit a 4 foot rock wall with his tail and then the nose hit the ground sliding approximately 1500 feet and a halt.”

Further deponent sayeth not:
[Signed] JAMES C. DOOLEY, Capt. A.C., 766th Bomb. Sqdn.
Sworn and subscribed before me this 20th day of April, 1944.
[Signed] DAVID W. HARP Jr., Major, Air Corps, Dep. Gp. Commander.

42-52221 | 1944-04-20

740TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
Office of The Operations Officer
23 April 1944
SUBJECT: Aircraft Accident.
TO: Whom it may concern.

Taking off on a combat mission to the South downwind on the morning of April 18, 1944, [date as typed] in a B-24H 42-52221, sluggishly I climbed to an altitude of 300 ft. with an airspeed of 150 miles per hour, at the same time making a turn to the right. At that altitude my Co-Pilot raised the flaps with my consent. Almost immediately after that we hit prop wash, and lost the altitude I had, before anything could be done to prevent us from crashing. I yelled for flaps and increased the power, but it did no good. Seeing that a crash landing could not be prevented, I pulled off all my power just before we hit.

[Signed] JOHN L. BETHUNE, 1st Lt, Air Corps, Pilot.

42-52235 | 1944-04-21

WAR DEPARTMENT — U.S. ARMY AIR FORCES
REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT — A.A.F. Form No. 14
Accident No. [handwritten: 44-4-21-521, final digits faint.]
(1) Place: San Giovanni. (2) Date: 4/21/44. (3) Time: 16:55.
(4) Type and model: B-24H. (5) A.F. No.: 41-25235 [as written]. (6) Station: APO #520, U.S. Army.
(7) 15th AF. (8) 455th BG. (H). (9) 740th B. Sq. (H).

PERSONNEL
Duty | Name | Rating | Serial number | Rank | Class
P | BECKNER, ROBERT L. | P | O-681309 | 1st Lt. | 01
CP | ENSMINGER, EZRA | CP | O-686235 | 2nd Lt. | 01
N | BRANDSTETTER, JOHN H. | N | T-1578 | F/O | 17
B | CAMPBELL, JACK A. | B | O-688914 | 2nd Lt. | 01
E | BECK, ROBERT W. | E | 16009006 | T/Sgt. | 38
AE | HARRIS, ELBERT L. | AE | 34463821 | S/Sgt. | 38
R | JOHNSON, PHILLIP A. | R | 18209480 | T/Sgt. | 38
AR | SYMKOWICZ, EDWARD A. | AR | 31312265 | S/Sgt. | 38
G | SUVAKAS, CONSTANTINE [surname reading uncertain] | G | 32343575 | S/Sgt. | 38
G | FENDER, ANDREW D. | G | 15331446 | S/Sgt. | 38
[All rows: branch AC; Air Force 15th; result None; parachute No.]

(20–24) BECKNER, ROBERT L.; O-681309; 1st Lt.; O-1; AC.
(25–28) Assigned: 15th AF; 455th; 740th; APO #520, US Army.
(33–37) Original rating: P, 5-24-43. Present rating: P. Instrument rating: 10-15-43.
(38–45) First pilot hours: this type 448:48; this model 201:50; last 90 days 124:40; total 767:10; instrument last 6 months 31:00; instrument last 30 days 0; night last 6 months 9:35; night last 30 days 0.

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE
(49) Fuselage bulkheads buckled, left main gear and wing. #1 & 2 Sudden stoppage. #1 & 2 Non repairable.
(50) CAVU. (51) No. (52–54) Cleared from San Giovanni A/D to Return; clearance VOCO.
(55) Combat.
(56) Airplane landed with both main wheels locked. Left main gear failed and airplane skidded to rest on belly and left wing.
(57) Brakes on and wheels locked when landing. Secondary cause left main gear failed.
[Classification stamps: RESTRICTED.]

42-52235 | 1944-04-21

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

Aircraft returned from combat mission with slight flak damage and made normal landing. Unintentionally either the pilot or co-pilot applied the brakes before touching. Both main wheels were locked causing tires to fail. Very shortly after tires blew out the left main landing strut failed and airplane skidded to stop on belly and left wing. It is believed that landing gear would not have failed had it not been structurally weak. Gear failure was the direct cause of structural damage to aircraft and engines. Both pilot and co-pilot deny having touched the brakes however there was positive evidence that brake system was in proper working order. Pilot is charged with fifty percent of accident cause and material failure of landing gear is considered a fifty percent contributing factor.

Recommend pilots be cautioned to make sure feet are not on brake pedals when landing. Also recommend close inspection of landing gear be made daily.

[Signatures] DAVID W. HARP, Major, AC, Investigating Officer; JACK D. REEDER [reading uncertain], Major, AC; HORACE W. TAYLOR [reading uncertain], Major, AC.
Date: 4/24/44.
[Inverted stamp: RECEIVED / MAY 20 1944.]

41-28665 | 1944-05-15

WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. Form No. 14 (Revised May 12, 1943)
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Stamped] 136.
Place: San Giovanni, Air Field. Date: 15 May 1944. Time: 1320.
Aircraft: B-24H, A.F. No. 41-28665. Station: San Giovanni, Air Field. Organization: 304th Wg--15th AF, 455th, 743rd Bomb Sq (H).

PERSONNEL [duty, name, rating, serial, rank, class]
P — KEAHEY, GEORGE O.; P; O-742727; 1st Lt.; 01.
CP — REGAN, MARK (NMI); CP; O-688275; 2nd Lt.; 01 [corrected].
E — REES, RAY E.; E; 39833873; S/Sgt.; 20 [corrected].
R — WALLACE, EDWIN N.; R; 18052222; S/Sgt.; 20 [corrected].
[All four: AC; 15th AF; None; No.]
[Received stamp] JUN 1 1944.

FIRST PILOT — KEAHEY, GEORGE O.; O-742727; 1st Lt.; O-1; AC. Assigned: 304th Wg--15th AF, 455th, 743rd Sq. (H), San Giovanni. Original and present rating: P [penciled dates faint].
Hours: This type 386:50; this model 275:10; last 90 days 137:20; total 386:50 [struck through]. Instrument last 6 months 17:00; last 30 days —. Night last 6 months 15:20; last 30 days —.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Aircraft 5, Class 26; engines 5, 5, 1, 1, #1 & 2 engines beyond repair; propellers 5, 5, 1, 1, #1 & 2 propellers beyond repair.
Weather: C.A.V.U. Flying on instruments: No. Cleared from San Giovanni, to Local. Clearance: Local. Pilot’s mission: Training.
Nature: Tire blow-out on take-off (Left main gear folded). A/C beyond repair.
Cause: Tire failure.
RESTRICTED

41-28665 | 1944-05-15

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

The pilot started a normal take-off as part of a formation training flight. At an indicated air speed of about 80 miles an hour the left main tire went flat & the throttles and brake applied in an attempt to bring the aircraft under control and swing it off the runway after slowing down. As the aircraft left the runway the left gear hit a small depression and was torn off, resulting in non-repairable structural damage to the aircraft.
The cause of the accident is attributed wholly to material failure and it recommended that closer inspection of tires be made to detect cuts and bruises which might cause blow-outs or rapid loss of pressure.
This was a group III accident.

[Signed] DAVID W. HARP, Major, AC.
Date: 19 May 1944.

41-28665 | 1944-05-15

STATEMENT
To whom it may concern:

I, George O. Keahey, 1st Lt., Air Corps, ASN O-742727 on the 15th of May 1944 piloted B-24H, No. 41-28665 on a practice mission. I was number three for takeoff in F box.

A routine inspection of tires and landing gear before starting failed to indicate any fault, however on takeoff when an indicated air speed of 75 to 80 mph had been attained the left tire went flat and the ship swerved to the left. I applied full left throttles and cut the right throttles attempting to hold it straight with throttles and rudder. When this had little effect, brakes, right only, were used but the left wing continued dropping and the ship ground looped some 100 feet to the left of the runway having lost the left landing gear as we left the runway.

[Signed] GEORGE O. KEAHEY, 1st Lt., Air Corps, Pilot.

[Heading at foot] STATEMENT

41-28665 | 1944-05-15

HEADQUARTERS
455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 US ARMY

19 May 1944

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Records.
TO: Commanding General, Army Air Forces, Washington, D.C.

In compliance with Part V, Par 1a, AAF Reg 62-14A, dd 28 January 1944, transmitted herewith is the AAF Form No 14 on an accident which occurred at this station.

For the Group Commander:

[Signed] DAVID W. HARP
Major, Air Corps,
Air Inspector

1 Incl — AAF Form No 14

[Inverted stamp: HQ AAF / MAY [day unclear] 1944 / A F S MAIL SECTION.]

42-95381 | 1944-07-02

WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. Form No. 14 (Revised May 12, 1943)
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Stamped] 038.
Place: San Giovanni Field. Date: 2 July 1944. Time: 07:18 [penciled correction appears to read 07:14].
Aircraft: B-24H, A.F. No. 42-95381. Station: APO 520, U.S. Army. Organization: 15th Air Force, 455th Bomb (H), 741st Bomb (H) Sq.

PERSONNEL [duty, name, rating, serial, rank, result]
P — LACKNER, ROBERT W.; P; O-811770; 2nd Lt.; Minor.
CP — TEEL, RODNEY B.; CP; O-822978; 2nd Lt.; Minor.
N — BRIZE, STEWART D. [surname reading uncertain]; N; O-717172; 2nd Lt.; K.I.A.
E — BUFFINGTON, ORMOND H.; E; 34709709; S/Sgt.; Minor.
BO — BAUER, DONALD P.; BO; 36642766; S/Sgt.; Minor.
AE — CONBOY, THOMAS P.; AE; 42021894; Sgt.; Minor.
WG — HUBAR, GEORGE J.; G; 35235941; Sgt.; Major.
WG — DIXON, WILLIAM T.; G; 38513900; Sgt.; Minor.
TG — STRICKLAND, MITCHELL L. [initial reading uncertain]; G; 14094198; Sgt.; Minor.
[All: A.C., 15th AF, no parachute use. Personnel class entries overwritten in pencil.]

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT — LACKNER, ROBERT WILLIAM; O-811770; 2nd Lt.; 18; A.C.
Assigned and attached for flying: 15th Air Force, 455th Bomb, 741st Bomb, APO 520, U.S. Army. Original and present rating: Pilot, 12/5/43. Instrument rating: 5/7/44.
Hours: This type 638:05; this model 116:00; last 90 days 124:05; total [struck through]. Instrument and night times blank.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Complete wreck. Aircraft 5; engine(s) 5, 5, 5, 5; propeller(s) 5, 5, 5, 5.
[Received stamp] JUL 18 1944.
Weather: CAVU. Flying on instruments: No. Cleared from San Giovanni to Secret. Clearance: Combat. Pilot's mission: Combat.
Nature: Ship was airborne with insufficient airspeed and stalled back into ground with wheels partially retracted.
Cause: Attempted to take off with insufficient airspeed and retracted wheels too soon.
RESTRICTED

42-95381 | 1944-07-02

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

The Pilot started a normal take off on a combat mission with a heavily loaded aircraft. Immediately after aircraft was airborne Co-pilot was instructed to retract landing gear, as the wheels began to raise ship mushed back into the ground.

Cause of accident is attributed wholly to Pilot error. Recommend that all pilots be instructed to leave landing gear down until sufficient airspeed is acquired.

[Signed] DAVID W. HARP JR., Major, AC; JACK D. REEDER, Major, AC; HORACE W. LANFORD, Major, AC. Date: July 9 1944 [day reading uncertain].

42-95381 | 1944-07-02

5 July 1944.
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

It was a normal Take-Off with air speed at one hundred fifteen (115) mile per hour the last time I noticed. The nose wheel was raised off the ground at about eighty (80) mile per hour. The aircraft flew off the ground prior to one hundred fifteen (115) mile per hour. The Co-Pilot reached for the Gear Handle and I gave “Gear Up” and then it seemed like something pushed us back onto the ground very abruptly and with force. I believe this force was propeller wash. The Co-Pilot cut the switches and I pulled back the throttles.

[Signed] ROBERT W. LACKNER, 2nd Lieut., Air Corps.

42-95381 | 1944-07-02

10 July 1944
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

The aircraft in question was seen to leave the ground approximately four hundred yards from the end of the runway. The aircraft leveled off and obviously had gained flying speed. It was moving along the ground approximately one foot off gaining speed. When a ship is definitely airborne I no longer watch it but turn to the take off end of the runway and signal the next aircraft off. Consequently the next aircraft had already been signalled off when the accident occurred. The aircraft then taking off was recalled by the use of red flares and I turned to view the accident. By this time the aircraft had completely reversed its direction at the end of the runway and there was a cloud of dust surrounding it, and the fire and crash crew were on their way to the crash.

[Signed] RAYMOND L. ARTUSY, Captain, Air Corps, Flight Control Officer.

42-95381 | 1944-07-02

10 July 1944
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

The aircraft in question was seen to leave the ground approximately four hundred yards from the end of the runway. The aircraft leveled off and obviously had gained flying speed. It was moving along the ground approximately one foot off gaining speed. When a ship is definitely airborne I no longer watch it but turn to the take off end of the runway and signal the next aircraft off. Consequently the next aircraft had already been signalled off when the accident occurred. The aircraft then taking off was recalled by the use of red flares and I turned to view the accident. By this time the aircraft had completely reversed its direction at the end of the runway and there was a cloud of dust surrounding it, and the fire and crash crew were on their way to the crash.

RAYMOND L. ARTUSY, Captain, Air Corps, Flight Control Officer.
[Unsigned copy of the preceding statement.]

42-95381 | 1944-07-02

5 July 1944.
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Things happened so fast I couldn't really say what happened; but I guess we hit propeller wash or a down draft of some sort just after the take-off. There is no question in my mind as to whether or not we attained proper flying speed as I looked at the air speed indicator just prior to my feeling the ship rise off the ground and it showed one hundred fifteen (115) mile per hour. At this point I turned around and faced the rear of the ship and started to reach for my parachute as the take-off seemed perfectly normal. Then we hit the ground with terrific force.

[Signed] ORMOND H. BUFFINGTON, Staff Sergeant 34709709.

42-50419 | 1944-07-04

WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. Form No. 14 (Revised May 12, 1943)
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Stamped] 037. [Handwritten] 45-7-4-506.
Place: San Giovanni Field. Date: 4 July 1944. Time: 184[obscured].
Aircraft: B-24H, A.F. No. 42-50419. Station: APO 520. Organization: 15th Air Force, 455th Bomb, 742nd Bomb (H).

PERSONNEL [duty, name, rating, serial, rank]
P — SWANNER, CHARLES E.; P; O-762017; 2nd Lt.
CP — NALER, JAMES D.; P; O-700518; 2nd Lt.
B — DRUMMOND, JOHN A.; B; O-716841; 2nd Lt.
E — BERN, DONALD L. [surname reading uncertain]; E; 36814264; S/Sgt.
R — ROSA, CARMEN; R; 31328350; S/Sgt.
[All five: A.C.; 15th; Uninjured; None. Class entries overwritten.]
[Received stamp] JUL 18 1944.

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT — SWANNER, CHARLES E.; O-762017; 2nd Lt.; 18; A.C. Assigned: B-24H [as entered], 455th, 742nd Bomb (H), APO 520. Attached for flying: 15th A.F., 455th, 742nd Bomb, APO 520. Original and present rating: Pilot, 12/5/43.
Hours: This type 88:05; this model 8:35; last 90 days 63:45; total [struck through]. Instrument last 6 months 24:00; last 30 days none. Night last 6 months 36:55; last 30 days none.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Aircraft 4; engines 1, 1, 1, 1. Nose and fuselage severely damaged, nose gear damaged.
Weather: 90° Cross wind, 25 MPH, gusty. Flying on instruments: No. From and to [penciled] Y785. Clearance: Local. Pilot’s mission: Practise bombing mission.
Nature: Crack up on landing.
Cause: Ran off runway into rough ground causing nose wheel to collapse.
RESTRICTED

42-50419 | 1944-07-04

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

Pilot was making a normall approach to land with a 90° gusty cross wind. When the wheels touched the aircraft was on the down wind side of the runway at a slight angle.

Pilot was unable to bring the plane back to runway and rough terrain caused nose wheel to collapse.

Cause of accident is attributed wholly to pilot error and recommend pilots be given more practise in cross wind landings and take offs.

[Signed] DAVID W. HARP JR., Major, AC; JACK D. REEDER, Major, AC; HORACE W. LANFORD, Major, AC. Date: July 9 1944.

42-50419 | 1944-07-04

5 JULY 1944
STATEMENT OF ACCIDENT

I MADE A NORMAL APPROACH TO THE FIELD ALLOWING FOR A VERY STRONG CROSS WIND. WE LANDED ON THE EAST RUNWAY TO THE SOUTH. I MADE THE LANDING FAIRLY WELL AND HAD ROLLED APPROXIMATELY ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY (150) FEET DOWN THE RUNWAY WHEN THE PLANE STARTED TO SWERVE SHARPLY TO THE LEFT. THE CROSS WIND BEING FROM THE RIGHT. I TRIED TO STOP IT WITH THE RUDDER BUT WITH NO SUCCESS. THEN I TRIED THE TWO LEFT THROTTLES BUT THAT WASN'T GOOD EITHER, SO I STARTED APPLYING THE BRAKES. BY THAT TIME I WAS OFF THE RUNWAY AND BECAUSE OF THE ROUGH GROUND, THE NOSE-WHEEL COLLAPSED. THUS RESULTING TO THE DAMAGE OF A SMASHED NOSE WHEN WE FINALLY CAME TO A FULL STOP. NONE OF THE CREW WERE INJURED.

[Signed] CHARLES E. SWANNER, 2nd Lt, Air Corps, Pilot.

42-78355 | 1944-07-16

AAF Form No. 14 — WAR DEPARTMENT — U.S. ARMY AIR FORCES
REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Handwritten accident number: 45-7-16-507, prefix reading uncertain.]
(1) San Giovanni, APO 520. (2) July 16, 1944. (3) 1315.
(4) B-24 [model letter partly obscured]. (5) 42-78355. (6) San Giovanni.
(7) 15th AF. (8) 455th. (9) 742nd Bomb Sq. (H).

PERSONNEL
Duty | Name
P | PARISH, JOHN W.
CP | RIDDELL, WILLIAM C.
N | BERRY, JOHN J. [surname uncertain]
B | [surname unclear], ALBERT R.
E | MASON, JOHN E.
R | BALKOVEC, JAMES B. [middle initial uncertain]
AE | BERTRAM, PAUL H.
AR | HARNISH, CHARLES L.
AG | LINN, RALEIGH J.
G | VESTAL, HAROLD W.
[Several serial numbers and personnel classes partly obscured. The branch is AC, the Air Force is 15th, the result is None and parachute use is No throughout.]

(20–24) PARISH, JOHN W.; O-695764; 2nd Lt.; 18; AC.
(25–28) Assigned: 15th AF; 455th; 742nd; APO 520.
(33–37) Pilot; original rating date 11/3/43 [reading uncertain]. Instrument rating date 5/5/44.
(38–40) First pilot hours: this type 150:00; this model 12:10 [reading uncertain]; last 90 days 122:30 [reading uncertain]. [Remaining entries obscured.]
(49) Lower part of nose damaged.
(50) CAVU. (51) No. (52–54) San Giovanni; Secret; Combat. (55) Combat.
(56) Nose wheel was retracted on landing causing damage to the nose section.
(57) Negligence on part of pilot, co-pilot & engineer, not using check list.
RESTRICTED.

42-78355 | 1944-07-16

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

It is the opinion of the accident board that the responsibility for this accident is placed on the pilot, co-pilot and engineer.

It is recommended that indoctrination of all crews in the constant use of check lists will help to eliminate accidents of this type.

[Three signatures. Names partly obscured or too faint to read confidently.]
Date: July 20, 1944 [day reading uncertain].

41-29264 | 1944-07-17

AAF Form No. 14 — WAR DEPARTMENT
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Stamped] 134. [Handwritten] 2 planes; 45-7-17-550 [reading uncertain].
Place: SAN GIOVANNI APO 520. Date: July 17, 1944. Time: 1330.
Aircraft: B-24H, A.F. No. 42-64351 [as typed]. Station: San GIOVANNI. Organization: 15th, 455th, 740th Bomb Sq. (H).
[The archive lists this report under 41-29264. The form gives 42-64351, and the engineer's statement dates the mission July 16. The aircraft identification and accident date need independent confirmation.]

PERSONNEL [duty, name, rating, serial, rank]
P — RUSSELL, EDMUND C.; P; O813423; 1st Lt.
CP — REYNOLDS, THOMAS G.; P; O619875; 2nd Lt.
N — GOLDEN, STANLEY R.; N; O719054; 2nd Lt.
B — NELSON, JAMES R.; B; O706894; 2nd Lt.
E — BHUTVAN, DONALD R. [surname reading uncertain]; E; 32848183; S/Sgt.
R — RHODES, ELVIN R.; R; 13083236; S/Sgt.
WG — CROOKS, ROBERT [initial illegible]; WG; 35048173; Sgt.
BT — CIULLA, FRANK B.; BTG; 32808181; Sgt.
TT — EYSTER, MARION D.; TTG; 35893137; Sgt.
WG — BOHUNEK, GLENN [surname reading uncertain, initial illegible]; WG; 15080753; Sgt.
[All ten: 15th; AC; None; No. Class column overwritten.]

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT — RUSSELL, EDMUND C.; O813423; 1st Lt.; 18; AC. Assigned: 15th AF, 455th, 740th, SAN GIOVANNI. Original rating: Pilot, 10/1/43. Present rating: Pilot, date overwritten. Hours: This type 402:20; this model 193:50; last 90 days 229:15; total 664:15. Instrument and night time: dashes.
[Received stamp] AUG 18 1944.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Aircraft 4; engines 1, 1, 4, 4; propellers 1, 1, 4, 4. #3 & #4 engine damaged. Nose section damaged. #3 & #4 damaged.
Weather: CAVU. Flying on instruments: No. Cleared from San Giovanni to Secret. Clearance: Combat. Pilot's mission: Combat.
Nature: Taxied into another aircraft.
Cause: Poor judgement in taxiing acft when fire was immanent.
RESTRICTED

41-29264 | 1944-07-17

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

Pilot used poor judgement in taxiing airplane when danger of fire was immanent.

[Signed] HUGH R. GRAFF, Lt. Col., AC (Investigating Officer); JACK D. REEDER, Major, AC; DAVID W. HARP JR., Major, AC.
Date: July 24 1944.

41-29264 | 1944-07-17

740th BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
Office of The Operations Officer
17 July 44
SUBJECT: Aircraft accident.
TO: Whom it may concern.

1. Upon returning from the raid on Vienna, Austria, we developed a gas leak in our bomb-bay. Being aware of this I landed with out turning on the auxilary hydraulic pump. After landing I was taxing in and No. 3 engine quit. I used up all my pressure when I applied brakes (not realizing No. 3 engine was out). I then noticed No. 3 engine was out, but I was approaching a turn and it was too late to start engine or auxilary hydraulic pump. I attempted to guide the plane what little I was able, to cause as little injury to personnel as possible I damaged a parked B-24.

[Signed] EDMUND C. RUSSELL, 1st Lt, Air Corps, Pilot.

41-29264 | 1944-07-17

740TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
Office of The Operations Officer
17 July 44
SUBJECT: Report of Air Craft accident.
TO: Whom it may concern.

1. On the morning of July 16, 1944 we went on a combat mission to Vienna, Austria. Over the target a piece of flak cut the gas line to No. 1 engine in the leading edge of the wing between No. 2 and No. 1 engines. Gas leaked through the leading edge into the bomb-bay, necessitating the cracking of the bomb-bay doors on the return trip because of gas fumes.

2. On the approach all was normal, except for the bomb load of frags. Landing was normal and routine for taxing, except for the auxilary hydraulic pump. This was left off because of danger of igniting the fumes through arcing in the hydraulic pump motor and switch.

3. After rounding the turn at the end of the runway No. 3 engine started to cut out. One hydraulic accumulator was used up in raising the flaps before No. 3 had stopped, and only one pressure accumulator was left for brake pressure. The co-pilot started to accelerate No. 3 starter meshing solenoid was out and No. 3 could not be started. By this time we had already made another turn while taxing and was close to another ship ahead of us. The pilot turned our plane away from the ship just ahead, and seeing a group of men in front of his path he swerved the plane around using No. 4 engine thus running into the plane from the 741st Sqdn. Damage to both planes could have been much less but in saving the planes the pilot would have killed about seven (7) men with the props. Switches were cut before collision and planes were both cleared because of danger of gas fumes and bomb-bay load.

[Signed] DONALD R. BHUTVAN [surname reading uncertain], S/Sgt, Engineer.

41-29264 | 1944-07-17

WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. Form No. 14 (Revised May 12, 1943)
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
Place: San Giovanni APO 520. Date: 17 July 1944. Time: 1330.
Aircraft: B-24. A.F. No. [blank]. Station: San Giovanni. Organization: 15th, 455 Bomb., 741 Bomb.
PERSONNEL — Parked Plane [handwritten across the name field].
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Aircraft 3; engines and propellers [penciled strokes across both rows]. List of damaged parts [blank].
[Remaining accident fields blank.]

42-64234 | 1944-07-22

WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. Form No. 14
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Handwritten] 45-7-22-508 [reading uncertain].
Place: Gioia Airfield. Date: 22 July 1944. Time: 1540 [as typed; see narrative]. Aircraft: B-24J [reading uncertain], A.F. No. 42-64234. Station: San Giovanni. Organization: 15th Air Force, 455th (H), 740th (H).

PERSONNEL [name, rating, serial, rank, result]
REYNOLDS, THOMAS G.; P; O-619875; 2nd Lt.; None.
GURKA, ALBERT; CP; O-713714; 2nd Lt.; Minor.
GOLDEN, STANLEY R.; N; O-719054; 2nd Lt.; None.
NELSON, JAMES R.; B; O-706894; 2nd Lt.; None.
BHUTVAN, D. R. [surname reading uncertain]; E; 32848183; S/Sgt.; None.
RHODES, E. R.; RO; 13083236; S/Sgt.; None.
BOHUNEK, GLENN W. [surname reading uncertain]; G; 15080753; Sgt.; None.
EYSTER, M. D.; G; 35893137; Sgt.; Minor.
CIULLA, FRANK; G; 32808181; Sgt.; Minor.
IMBURG, VINCENT [surname reading uncertain]; G; 16088677; T/Sgt.; Minor.
[All: AC, 15th, no parachute use. Class entries overwritten.]

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT — REYNOLDS, THOMAS G.; O-619875; 2nd Lt.; 18; AC. Assigned: 15th Air Force, 455th, 740th (H), San Giovanni. Original and present rating: Pilot, 1-7-44 [date reading uncertain]. First pilot hours obscured by stamp. [Received stamp] AUG 8 1944.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Destroyed. Aircraft 5; engines and propellers each 5, 5, 5, 5.
Weather: CAVU. Flying on instruments: NO. Cleared from San Giovanni to Combat. Clearance: Combat.
Pilot’s mission / nature of accident [continuous entry]: #4 engine was cut off and feathered before ship reached target and ship had difficulty in keeping up with formation. #3 engine was smoking and #4 engine feathered as ship sighted Gioia Airfield, with 80 gallons of gas [quantity reading uncertain]. Pilot could not contact tower and came in for a landing downwind, landing on the last third of the emergency strip. Ship went over the end of strip and and went over ditch, breaking ship in two at number 4 Station.
Cause [field blank apart from handwritten codes].
RESTRICTED

42-64234 | 1944-07-22

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

I investigated the crash of Aircraft B-24J, 42-64234 on or about 1630 hours, 22 July 1944. The plane landed downwind using the last third of the field. The pilot couldn't stop the plane and it went across a ditch at the end of the Field. The extent of the damage to the plane was main landing gears were sheared off, all props were damaged, the fuselage was twisted, and from station 4 forward the fuselage was broken in two.

No recommendations for the prevention of repetition is submitted.

[Signed] Harold E. Dodd [reading uncertain], 1st Lt AC, AFAD 52, APO 520.
Date: 29 July 1944.

44-40501 | 1944-07-31

AAF Form No. 14 — WAR DEPARTMENT — U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES
REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Accident number handwritten: 45-7-31-528. Additional markings partly illegible.]
(1) Place: A.P.O. 520. (2) Date: 7-31-44. (3) Time: 1700.
(4) Type and model: B-24J. (5) A.F. No.: 44-40501. (6) Station: APO 520.
(7) 15th AF. (8) 455th. (9) 741st.

PERSONNEL
[Three entries. Heavy overprinting obscures parts of the names and service numbers.]
P | CROSSER, HARRY J. | F/O | AC
CP | [name unclear] | 2nd Lt. [uncertain] | AC
[Duty unclear] | [name unclear] | Sgt. | AC
[Parachute column reads None throughout. Other entries partly illegible.]

(20–24) CROSSER, HARRY J.; T-62212 [reading uncertain]; F/O; 17; A.C.
(25–28) Assigned: 15th AF; 455th; 741st; APO 520.
(33) Original rating: P. (35) Present rating: P.
(38–41) First pilot hours: this type [unclear]; this model 45:00 [uncertain]; last 90 days 102:10; total 555:40 [uncertain].
(49) List of damaged parts: Complete wreck.
(50) Weather: CAVU. (51) Flying on instruments: No.
(52–54) Cleared from SAN GIOVANNI to Local. Clearance: Local.
(55) Pilot’s mission: Test Flight.
(56) Nature of accident: Landing accident.
(57) Cause of accident: Tab cables for rudder and elevator were crossed.
RESTRICTED. [Received stamp: AUG 23 1944.]

44-40501 | 1944-07-31

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT
(Brief narrative of accident. Include statement of responsibility and recommendations for action to prevent repetition)

The trim tab cables for rudder and elevator were crossed (see attached statements). When pilot put rudder correction in on trim, he received down elevator action. The pilot was unable to control airplane on approach to landing, striking barbed wire fence and blowing nose wheel tire. This caused subsequent failure of right main landing gear.

The responsibility for this accident lies with the maintenance man. It is recommended that more precaution is used when repairing control cables [and] control surfaces etc. and that a thorough check and recheck for movements of controls be made before released for flight.

[Signatures] HUGH R. GRAFF, Lt. Col., AC (Investigating Officer); JACK D. [surname unclear], Major, AC; DAVID W. HARP, Major, AC.
Date: 8/10/44.

42-78402 | 1944-08-01

AAF Form No. 14 — WAR DEPARTMENT
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
Place: SAN GIOVANNI, ITALY. Date: 8-1-44. Time: 03:15. Aircraft: B-24H, A.F. No. 42-78402. Station: APO # 520. Organization: 15th AF, 455th, 742nd Bomb Sq.

PERSONNEL [duty, name, rating, serial, rank]
P — REYNOLDS, WINTON S.; P; O699735; 2nd Lt.
CP — PHILLIPS, KENNETH L.; CP; O772484; 2nd Lt.
E — BEARS, EARL R.; E; 32934883; Sgt.
R — PROUTY, HARRY C.; R; 35217332; Sgt.
[All: 15th, AC, None, None. Class entries overwritten.]
[Received stamp] AUG 20 1944 [day reading uncertain].

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT — REYNOLDS, WINTON S.; O699735; 2nd Lt.; 18; AC. Assigned: 15th AF, 455th, 742nd, APO 520, US ARMY. Original rating: P, 12-5-43. Present rating and date: Same.
Hours: This type 122:35; this model 56:40; last 90 days 108:20; total 122:35 [struck through]. Instrument last 6 months 10:45; last 30 days 4:45. Night last 6 months 35:15; last 30 days 8:05.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Complete Wreck. [Faint penciled ratings.]
Weather: C A V U. Flying on instruments: No. Cleared from SAN GIOVANNI to Local. Clearance: Local. Pilot's mission: Night Training.
Nature: Taxied into ditch.
Cause: Due to pilot error, Aircraft was taxied into ditch on side of taxi strip.
RESTRICTED

42-78402 | 1944-08-01

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

Pilot taxied into ditch on right of plane, causing main right landing gear to buckle.
Poor judgement on part of pilot and Co-Pilot in taxing is responsible for accident. Further indoctrination of pilots is necessary to impress upon them the importance of close cooperation of pilots & copilots while taxiing this type aircraft.

[Signed] HUGH R. GRAFF, Lt. Col., AC (Investigating Officer); JACK D. REEDER, Major, AC; DAVID W. HARP, Major, AC.
Date: 8-10-44.

42-78402 | 1944-08-01

2 August 1944
STATEMENT

In regard to the accident, while taxing of airplane # 402 of the 742nd Bomb Sq (H), 455th Bomb Gp (H).

A crew of four men, Pilot, Co-Pilot, Engineer, Radio Operator were scheduled to make a routine night flight in the area, shoot a few landings and return to the hard stand. This flight was completed without any eventuality.

Clearence was given by the tower to taxi back to the Squadron area. While enroute to the area an accident occured.

After turning off the runway I locked the controls, as there was a cross wind. I placed the Co-Pilot with the aldis lamp at the top hatch to spot me as I proceeded to taxi. I refrained from using the land-lights to taxi with the specific purpose of not blinding aircraft attempting an approach and landing to the north, while I taxied to the south.

Quite suddenly; although everything had been quite normal ample light with the use of the lamp, throttles at one thousand (1000) RPM, by the use of the friction lock to insure restained taxing, we experienced what seemed to be a sudden and complete collapse of the right landing gear. Taking into consideration what could happen I hit the crash bar and yelled, “get out the top hatch”. In a few moments we were clear of the ship. Personnel were immediately at hand to extinguish an apparent smoking on number three (3) engine.

[Signed] WINTON S. REYNOLDS, 2nd Lt, Air Corps, Pilot.

42-78402 | 1944-08-01

[2] August 1944
STATEMENT

After landing the Pilot stopped to lock the controls. Then we resumed taxing with throttles locked at one thousand (1000) RPM. The Co-Pilot was spotting down the taxi strip with the Aldis Lamp. All of a sudden the right landing gear collapsed. I hit the crash bar then we left the ship by the way of the top hatch.

[Signed] EARL R. BEARS, Sgt, Air Corps, Engineer.

44-41151 | 1944-08-12

AAF Form No. 14 — WAR DEPARTMENT
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Stamped] 071. Place: APO 520. Date: 8-12-44. Time: 2030.
Aircraft: B-24J [model reading uncertain], A.F. No. 44-41151. Station: APO 520. Organization: 15th AF, 455th, 742nd.

PERSONNEL [duty, name, rating, serial, rank]
P — KEIL, ERWIN L. [reading uncertain]; Pilot; O-689971 [reading uncertain]; 1st Lt.
CP — MOORE, WILLIAM R. [surname reading uncertain]; CP; T-3074 [reading uncertain]; F/O.
E — DOER, DOMINICK L. [surname reading uncertain]; E; 32745773 [reading uncertain]; T/Sgt.
AE — NOVAK, ELMER P.; AE; 33548573 [reading uncertain]; S/Sgt.
R — AGNER, CLARK (NMI) [surname reading uncertain]; R; 32084680 [reading uncertain]; S/Sgt.
[All: 15, AC, Uninjured, None. Type is heavily inked; class entries partly obscured.]
[Received stamp] AUG 29 1944.

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT — KEIL, ERWIN L. [reading uncertain]; O-689971 [reading uncertain]; 1st Lt.; 18; AC. Assigned: 15th AF, 455th, 742nd, APO 520. Original rating: Pilot, 8-30-43 [date reading uncertain]. Present rating and date: Same.
Hours: This type 1000:00 [as entered]; this model 734:10; last 90 days 249:55; total [obscured]. Instrument last 6 months 12:00; last 30 days 2:00. Night last 6 months 16:55; last 30 days 3:25.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Nose wheel damage, fuselage around nose wheel damage.
Weather: CAVU. Flying on instruments: No. Cleared from [obscured] to APO 520. Pilot’s mission: Ferry ship.
Nature: Nose gear collapsed on landing.
Cause: Nose gear failure.
RESTRICTED

44-41151 | 1944-08-12

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

A normal landing was effected after gear was checked in locked down position. When pilot lowered nose on contact with ground, nose gear collapsed. Faulty locking mechanism was cause of accident.

[Signed] HUGH R. GRAFF, Lt. Col., AC (Investigating Officer); JACK D. REEDER, Major, AC; DAVID W. HARP, Major, AC.
Date: 8/12/44 [reading uncertain].

44-41151 | 1944-08-12

HEADQUARTERS
455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 US ARMY
15 August 1944

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Records.
TO: Chief, Flying Safety, AAF, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

In compliance with Part V, Par 1 a, AAF Reg 62-14A, dated 28 January 1944, transmitted herewith are four (4) AAF Form No 14's, for aircraft accidents which occurred at this field.

For the Group Commander:
[Signed] HUGH R. GRAFF, Lt. Col., Air Corps, Air Inspector.
4 Incls - AAF Form No 14's.

42-78525 | 1944-08-31

RESTRICTED
WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. Form No. 14 (Revised May 12, 1943)
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Handwritten] 45-8-31-506.
Place: BARI, ITALY. Date: 31 August 1944. Time: 1310. Aircraft: B-24 J, A.F. No. 278525 [as written]. Station: Cerignola. Organization: 15th AF, 455th B.G., 740th B.S.

PERSONNEL [duty, name, rating, serial, rank, branch]
P — ASCH, Alfred (NMI); P; O-724268; Major; AC-Res.
CP — OHLLEYE[R], Harold Z. [surname reading uncertain]; P; O-667339; Captain; AC-Res.
E — PEDLEY, Merle V.; E; 33018815; T/Sgt.; AC.
AE — KLEPPER, Frank B.; E; 39291836; S/Sgt.; AC.
AG — DALY, James P.; AG; 32797722; S/Sgt.; AC.
[All: 15th AF, None, None. Officers class 01. Enlisted class entries overwritten.]
[Received stamp] SEP 18 1944.

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT — ASCH, Alfred (NMI); O-724268; Major; 01; AC-Res. Assigned and attached for flying: 15th AF, 455th B.G., 740th B.S., Cerignola. Original and present rating: Pilot, 24 Apr. 42. Hours: This type approx. 1000; this model approx. 25; last 90 days approx. 130; total approx. 1200. Instrument and night time: dashes.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Station 0 to Sta. 3 wrecked, nose gear wrecked. Engines OK. Propellers OK.
Weather: CAVU. Flying on instruments: No. Cleared from Cerignola to Bari. Clearance: Contact. Pilot's mission: Administrative.
Nature: Nose gear collapsed on landing.
Cause: Nose gear not in locked down position.
(58) No form 54 being submitted.
[Classification stamp] CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED OR CHANGED TO RESTRICTED BY AUTHORITY OF C G, AAF. BY FCA [reading uncertain], DATE [partly cut off].

42-78525 | 1944-08-31

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

I. NARRATIVE:
Wind NW 8 mph, CAVU. B-24 J #298525 [as typed], made normal approach for landing with radio contact. Plane touched down in first third of NW/SE runway on main wheels. As speed of aircraft decreased the nose wheel touched ground and collapsed. Plane skidded on nose for approximately 500 yards; main gear O.K.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:
Pilot had gear lowered by emergency procedure in air because of broken hydraulic line. Aerial Engineer reported gear down and locked. Electrical warning system on nose gear was destroyed and could not be checked. When aircraft was jacked up and the jammed nose gear doors were pried open by crowbars the gear fell into the proper down position and locked perfectly proving that locking device was in perfect working condition.

It is the opinion of the investigating officer that the crew member who lowered nose gear failed to properly check locking device [handwritten correction] and is responsible.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS:
Airplane commanders or crew members when preparing an aircraft for a landing, especially when an emergency system is used, and who check the aircraft in a slipshod or careless manner should be dealt with by the most severe disciplinary action.

[Signed] ROBERT W. LANE [surname reading uncertain], Captain, AC.
Date: 8 September 1944.

42-78525 | 1944-08-31

Statement of ASCH, ALFRED (NMI), Major, AC, O-724368 [as typed], (Pilot, B-24 #278525).

Hydraulic line broke between pump and landing gear hydraulic mechanism. It was necessary to crank wheels down by hand. We had 1100# accumulator pressure for flaps and brakes but the co-pilot pumped the flaps down by hand to save the accumulator pressure for brakes.

The Engineer reported landing gear down and locked, a normal landing was made and when initial speed was lost, the nose of the ship let down on nose wheel. It felt as if the nose wheel was not locked in the down position because the nose of the ship hit the runway before brakes were employed, however, the warning horn did not blow and landing gear warning light showed down and locked for main gear and engineer had checked nose wheel for down and locked.

After aircraft had come to a stop, I personally checked nose wheel mechanism which was in the un-locked and up position, and there were no signs of stress on the gear and locking mechanism what-so-ever. It is believed by me the nose wheel came unlocked on the final approach after the engineer had checked it for down and locked and when the ships nose settled to the ground after landing, the gear went up in the retracted position.

[Signed] ALFRED (NMI) ASCH, Major, Air Corps, 455th B. G., 740th B. S.

42-78525 | 1944-08-31

AERO REPAIR SECTION
OFFICE OF THE ENGINEERING OFFICER
AFOD NO. 5 APO 528
9 September 1944.

SUBJECT: Aircraft Damage - B-24J AAF No. 42-78525.
TO: Aircraft Accident Committee, AFOD #5, APO 528, U S Army.

1. Upon landing at this station, subject airplane was damaged at lower part of fuselage from station 0.0 to station 3.0. Accident was caused by nose wheel not being in down-locked position while landing.

2. Airplane was jacked up and upon removal of nose wheel doors, nose gear dropped down into extended position and locked.

3. Damage classification on subject airplane - Major.

[Signed] I. H. POLK [initial reading uncertain], Captain, Air Corps, Engineering Officer.

42-78525 | 1944-08-31

SECRET
HEADQUARTERS 11TH AIR DEPOT GROUP
Office of the Commanding Officer
PEA/jem
10 September 1944
APO 528 US Army

SUBJECT: Report of Aircraft Accident.
TO: Director of Flying Safety, Winston Salem, N. C.
Commanding General, XV Air Force, APO 520, U. S. Army
Commanding Officer, 455th Bomb Gp, 740th Bomb Squadron, APO 520

1. Transmitted herewith in compliance with AAF Regulation 62-14A, 28 January 1944, are Reports of Aircraft Accident.

For the Commanding Officer:
P. E. ALLEN, [rank obscured], Air Corps, Adjutant.
1 Incls: Acft Acc. B-24 J #278525
SECRET

42-78200 | 1944-09-13

AAF Form No. 14 — WAR DEPARTMENT
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Stamped] 075. Place: APO 520, U.S. ARMY. Date: Sept. 13, 44. Time: 1500.
Aircraft: B-24G, A.F. No. 42-78200. Station: APO #520. Organization: 15th AF, 455th, 742nd Bomb Sq. (H).

PERSONNEL [duty, name, rating, serial, rank]
P — WRIGHTSON, CLIFFORD E.; P; O818792; 2nd Lt.
CP — EDELSTEIN, ALBERT M.; CP; O822031; 2nd Lt.
N — JENKINS, EDWIN H.; N; O717218; 2nd Lt.
B — STROET, CHARLES C. [surname reading uncertain]; B; O718152; 2nd Lt.
E — GRAY, WILLIAM B.; E; 35145968; Sgt.
AE — PATRICK, RICHARD W.; AE; 19140741; Sgt.
R — CROSBY, FRANK A.; R; 31270368; Sgt.
AR — CUPTO, GEORGE O. [surname reading uncertain]; AR; 13179116; Sgt.
AG — WESLEY, CHARLES B.; AG; 37515729; Sgt.
AG — KERIN, MILTON E. [surname reading uncertain]; AG; 36806897; Sgt.
[All: 15th, AC, None, No. Class entries overwritten.]
[Received stamp] OCT [day obscured] 1944.

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT — WRIGHTSON, CLIFFORD E.; O818792; 2nd Lt.; 18; AC. Assigned: 15th AF, 455th, 742nd, APO #520. Original rating: Pilot, 12-5-43. Present rating: Same.
Hours: This type 208:55; this model 11:35; last 90 days 163:50; total 208:55 [struck through]. Instrument and night time: dashes.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — A Complete Wreck. [Penciled ratings faint.]
Weather: CAVU. Flying on instruments: NO. Cleared from SAN GIOVANNI to SECRET. Clearance: Combat.
Pilot’s mission: Combat Bombing Mission.
Nature: Belly landed in open field.
Cause: Ran out of gas in No’s 1 & 2 engines.
RESTRICTED

42-78200 | 1944-09-13

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

Number 1 engine quit when out of gas immediately after peel off and pilot didn't let wheels down but continued to make the turn around the field loosing excessive altitude on the turn, when turning onto base leg #2 engine failed then without sufficient altitude the pilot was forced to turn in sharply before reaching the landing strip and land in an open field. Having insufficient altitude and air speed to lower the gear he was forced to make a belly landing, resulting in complete wreckage of the airplane. When #1 engine failed during peel off pilot failed to immediately cut into traffic pattern even though he was unable to contact tower - the other pilots would have given way when they noticed he only had 3 engines, also the pilot failed to maintain sufficient altitude in the traffic pattern to unable him to reach the field.
Major cause - Pilot error
Minor cause - error in judgement

RECOMMENDATIONS
That this information be dissiminated to all pilots.

[Signed] WILLIAM [remaining name obscured], Major, AC (Investigating Officer); DAVID W. HARP, JR., Lt. Col., AC; JACK D. REEDER, Major, AC.
Date: 9-20-44.

42-78200 | 1944-09-13

STATEMENT
Pilots report on B-24G (42-78200) Crash Landing, 1500, 13 September 1944.

1. Engineer transferred and checked fuel twenty (20) minutes from home base and read 125 gallons in No. 1, 2, 4, engines. No. 3 read 75 gallons.

2. On the second circle of the field when “B” box, our box, peeled off, No. 1 engine went out. The fuel pressure and cylinder head temperature fell off quickly to zero and the manifold pressure was stuck at 30. We followed the formation in, slightly behind them, trying to start No. 1 engine. As we started to turn onto base leg #2 engine went out rapidly in the same manner as #1. We feathered #2 immediately and at this time we were at 350 feet above the terrain. We called to Carroll Tower but received no reply. Meanwhile we were going to attempt a landing at the home field, but because of three ships on the approach, and because of our position, which was a mile and a half south and a mile west of the landing strip, and because of our low altitude we quickly decided against such an attempt and headed the plane straight ahead into the nearest field. The air speed on the approach was indicating 120 mph and we though that putting the gear down at such an airspeed would stall us out a few hundred feet in the air and possibly spin us in. We dumped full flaps as we rounded out and the round out was completed about the same time as we hit the wires in our path. The prop dug in and pivoted us toward the good engine. We skidded for about 80 or 90 yards and came to a stop. We cut the switches and climbed out, while #4 was spouting gas or oil.

[Signed] CLIFFORD E. WRIGHTSON, 2nd Lt, Air Corps, Pilot.

42-78200 | 1944-09-13

STATEMENT
Engineers report on B-24G (42-78200) Crash Landing, 1500, 13 September 1944.

1. I made a check on the gas forty-five minutes before arriving at our field. Each tank had approximately one hundred and twenty five gallons for each engine. We circled the field in our formation. I was in the waist to check the landing gears for down and locked when the Co-Pilot called me over interphone and told me to check the gears in a hurry. I noticed that number two was already feathered and we were loosing altitude fast and as fast as we were dropping it was impossible to make the landing strip. Being in the waist I didn't get to notice all that did happen.

[Signed] WILLIAM B. GRAY, Sgt, AC, Engineer.

42-78200 | 1944-09-13

HEADQUARTERS 455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF
Office of the Technical Inspector
A.P.O. 520 US ARMY
25 September 1944

SUBJECT: AAF Form No. 14.
TO: Chief, Flying Safety, AAF
Winston Salem, N.C.

1. In compliance with Fifteenth Air Force Memorandum No. 120-5, dated 9 July 1944, Transmitted herewith is AAF Form No. 14 with statements on an Aircraft Accident which occured at this Field.

For the Group Commander:
[Signed] AMON H HAILE, WOJG, AUS, Technical Inspector.
- 1 -

42-78355 | 1944-11-01

AAF Form No. 14 — WAR DEPARTMENT
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Handwritten] 11-24-44 (Y785); 45-11-1-515 [reading uncertain]. [Stamped] 61.
Place: San Giovanni. Date: 1 Nov. 1944. Time: 0930. Aircraft: B-24G, A.F. No. 42-78355. Station: APO #520.
Organization: 15th AF, 455th, 742nd.

PERSONNEL [duty, name, rating, serial, rank, class]
P — HART, JOHNSTON M.; P; O664587; 1st Lt.; 18 [overwritten].
CP — VANDERVEN, HARRY W. [as typed]; CP; O1540461; 2nd Lt.; 18 [overwritten].
N — BECKMAN, L. M.; N; O7222 [as entered]; 2nd Lt.; 18.
B — SMITH, CHADBOURNE B.; B; O773462; 2nd Lt.; 18.
E — DEMALINE, ROBERT E.; E; 35552947; Sgt.; 38.
R — DAWSON, THURSTON M.; R; 15099151; Sgt.; 20.
G — GITMAN, HARLAND M. [surname reading uncertain]; G; 31375273; Sgt.; 38.
G — KILBANE, JOHN K.; G; 36579893; Sgt.; 38.
G — FISHER, CHARLES; G; 18166718; Sgt.; 20.
G — KUESECKER, DUANE F. [surname reading uncertain]; G; 37669498; Sgt.; 38.
[All: 15th, AC, None, None.]

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT — HART, JOHNSTON M.; O664587; 1st Lt.; 18; AC. Assigned: 15th, 455th, 742nd, APO #520. Original rating: Pilot, 9-6-42. Present rating and date: Same.
Hours: This type 178:35; this model 18:20; last 90 days 73:25; total 178:35 [struck through]. Instrument and night time: dashes.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Class 26. Aircraft 4; engines and propellers each 4, 4, 4, 4 [penciled].
Weather: C A V U. Flying on instruments: No. Cleared from San Giovanni to Secret. Clearance: VOCO. Pilot's mission: Combat.
Nature: Accident while taxiing. Group II.
Cause: High Speed taxiing on slippery strip.
RESTRICTED

42-78355 | 1944-11-01

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

The aircraft was being taxied out for take-off on a combat mission. The speed was excessive considering the condition of the taxi strip and upon approaching a 70 degree turn to the right the pilot applied brakes, locked the wheels, but continued in the original direction of travel. The aircraft skidded off the strip sideways into a deep ditch collapsing the left main gear and damaging the left wing and fuselage to such an extent the aircraft was salvaged.
The accident was primarily caused by pilot error, however the taxiway was extremely muddy and slippery. Recommend all pilots be warned to taxi very slowly and use extreme caution on wet taxi strips. Further recommend every effort be made to put an all weather surface on taxiways and runways at this base.

[Signed] DAVID W. HARP JR., Lt. Col., AC (Investigating Officer); WILLIAM [remaining name obscured], Lt. Col., AC; JACK D. REEDER, Major, AC.
Date: 5 November 1944.

42-78355 | 1944-11-01

STATEMENT OF ACCIDENT

1. Statement regarding accident on 1 November 1944, involving plane #42-78-355 at about 0945.

2. I had left the hardstand a few minutes late, because the deputy lead which I was to follow had taxied from his hardstand without my knowing it. Someone else had just advised me by radio that I was holding up the box. I felt obligated to waste no time, but was particularly careful not to go too fast over the muddy, slippery strip. However when I made the slight turn to the right on the most western part of the field, I continued to turn to the right side of the strip very slowly. I corrected with my right engines, overcorrecting to the left slightly. Again I corrected my direction with the (left) engines. I had rolled a very short distance, straight ahead and in the middle of the strip, when I realized I was going too fast to accomplish the next turn. I held the throttles back against the quadrant and applied the brakes cautiously. The wheels stopped and the plane slipped ahead with no indication of slowing down. I released the brakes and held little hope of making the turn without braking power. As I approached the spot one would normally start turning I eased a little power on my left engines. The plane, I believe started to turn and then skidded in the line of its momentum. Had I not attempted to make the turn, the plane would have nosed up straight ahead and might conceivable have been flown again. However the accident occurred quickly.

3. The plane entered the drainage ditch on the outside of the turn at an angle, heading about ten o’clock from the flight deck. At the bottom, the left main and nose struts broke. The tail moved around so that the plane was heading about forty-five degrees to the right of its path of taxi. The plane settled on the lower left side of the fuselage against the embankment bordering the outside of the ditch. The two gear struts were collapsed, the wing sprung about eight feet from the left wing tip, the two left engines struck the ground, the props were twisted, the left bomb bay was caved in, the catwalk twisted upward at station 5,6, the bulkhead stabilizer and rudder were damaged against the ground. The switch was turned off immediately after the plane stopped, the left wing was leaking gasoline.

4. Needless to say I was going too fast just previous to the second turn. The speed is difficult to describe, but I don’t believe anyone would have considered it too fast had the strips been dry. The accident was caused by pilot error. There is more personnal feeling about its happening, but it does not belong in this report.

[Signed] JOHNSTON M. HART, 1st Lt., Air Corps, Pilot.

42-78355 | 1944-11-01

STATEMENT OF ACCIDENT

1. STATEMENT OF ACCIDENT ON SHIP #42-78355, ON 1 NOVEMBER 1944.

2. THE SHIP WAS BEING TAXIED ALONG THE MUDDY TAXI STRIP. WE CAME TO A TURN IN THE TAXI STRIP THAT ANGLED TO THE RIGHT ABOUT 90 DEGREES. AS WE STARTED AROUND THE TURN THE SHIP CONTINUED TO GO FORWARD. WE THEN RAN UP NUMBER ONE AND TWO ENGINES, THE SHIP CONTINUED TO GO STRAIGHT FORWARD BUT THE ENGINES ON THE LEFT SIDE CAUSED THE SHIP TO TURN. THEN WE WERE SKIDDING ALMOST BROAD SIDE. WE WENT INTO A DITCH THAT WAS ABOUT 3 FEET DEEP. THE LANDING GEAR ON THE LEFT SIDE COLLAPSED TODARD THE FUSELAGE. THE LEFT WING HIT THE GROUND AND BENT NEAR THE WING TIP. THE NOSE WHEEL WAS TURN LOOSE. THE BOMBAY WAS PUT OUT OF SHAPE. THE PROPS ON NUMBER ONE AND TWO WERE BENT OUT OF SHAPE. WHILE THIS HAPPENED WE TURNED OFF ALL THE SWITCHES.

[Signed] HARRY W. VANDER VAN, 2ND LT., AIR CORPS, CO-PILOT.

42-78355 | 1944-11-01

STATEMENT OF ACCIDENT

1. REPORT OF ACCIDENT ON SHIP #42-78355 WHILE TAXING.

2. DUE TO THE FACT OF HAVING TOO MUCH SPEED AND BEING ON A SOFT, MUDDY TAXI STRIP WE FAILED TO TURN AND SKIDDED INTO A DITCH.

3. THE FULL EXTENT OF THE DAMAGES NOT KNOWN BUT AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE LEFT LANDING GEAR BROKEN, NOSE WHEEL COLLAPSED, LEFT WING TIP BROKEN AND DAMAGE TO THE FUSELAGE.

[Signed] ROBERT E. DEMALINE, SGT, AIR CORPS, ENGINEER.

42-78355 | 1944-11-01

HEADQUARTERS 455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF
Office of the Technical Inspector
APO 520 US ARMY
H-AHH-1
11 November 1944

SUBJECT: AAF Form No 14.
TO: Chief Flying Safety, AAF
Winston Salem, N.C.

1. In compliance with Fifteenth Air Force Memorandum No. 120-5, dated 9 July 1944, Transmitted herewith is AAF Form No. 14 with statements on an Aircraft Accident which occured at this Field.

For the Group Commander:
[Signed] AMON H HAILE, WOJG, AUS, Gp Tech Insp
- 1 -

42-51873 | 1944-11-16

AAF Form No. 14 — WAR DEPARTMENT
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Stamped] 49. [Handwritten] 45-11-16-510.
Place: San Giovanni, Italy. Date: 16 November 1944. Time: 0800. Aircraft: B-24J, A.F. No. 42-51873. Station: APO 520, U.S. Army. Organization: 15th, 455th Bomb, 740th Bomb.

PERSONNEL [duty, name, rating, serial, rank, class]
P — Hollreck, Richard H.; P; O-822704; 2nd Lt.; 18 [overwritten].
CP — Stokem, Frederick W.; CP; O-224982; 2nd Lt.; 18.
B — Riley, Lewis A.; B; T-126443; F/O; 17.
N — Westerman, Kenneth F.; N; O-2060518; 2nd Lt.; 18.
E — Lucas, George L.; E; 18046503; T/Sgt.; 20.
R — Caulfield, John J.; R; 32938541; T/Sgt.; 21.
G — Engle, Robert E. [initial reading uncertain]; G; 35231475; Sgt.; 21.
G — Cleveland, Robert W.; G; 37702435; Sgt.; 21.
G — Yost, Fred M.; G; 38437366; S/Sgt.; 21.
F — Rehrer, Carl E. [initial reading uncertain]; F; 15060389; S/Sgt.; 20.
[All: 15th, AC, None, No.]

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT — Hollreck, Richard H.; O-822704; 2nd Lt.; 18; AC. Assigned: 15th, 455th Bomb, 740th Bomb, APO 520, U.S. Army. Original rating: Pilot, 3/12/44. Present rating and date: Same [struck through].
Hours: This type 165:25; this model 100:55; last 90 days 67:00; total 169:00 [struck through, reading uncertain]. Instrument and night time: dashes.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — See Inclosure. [Penciled ratings partly illegible.]
Weather: CAVU. Flying on instruments: No. Cleared from San Giovanni to Secret. Clearance: Combat. Pilot's mission: Combat.
Nature: Main landing gear collapsed while taxiing. Group III.
Cause: Mechanical failure of landing gear system.
[Handwritten] Incl. #1.
RESTRICTED

42-51873 | 1944-11-16

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

The engines were started in the hardstand with the landing gear handle in the down position. As soon as pressure was built up in the free-flow system the landing gear selector valve kicked to the neutral position but in so doing passed neutral momentarily due to high kick-out pressure or some other malfunction of the selector valve. Had the safety solenoid been extended this obviously could not have happened, but as it was a sufficient surge of pressure was built up in the retract side of the actuating cylinder to break the lock. As a result when the airplane was taxied out onto the taxi strip the gear completely collapsed. I am positive the gear handle was not manually placed in the up position; therefore it is a case of 100% mechanical failure.

It is recommended that unless maintenance work has been performed on the system, the practice of putting the gear handle in the down position after parking be discontinued.

Incls: [count unclear]
Incl 1 - Form 54 Unsatisfactory Report.
Incl 2 - Form 205 Medical Officer’s Report of Aircraft Accident.
Incl 3 - Sub. Ltr “Damaged Parts on Airplane B24J, 42-51873.
Incl 4 - 6 Certificates on Accident.

[Signed] DAVID W. HARP, Jr., Lt. Col., A.C. (Investigating Officer).
Date: 20 November 1944.

42-51873 | 1944-11-16

740TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
Office of the Operations Officer
16 November 1944

CERTIFICATE

I started engines with gear handle in down position, gear handle came to neutral after No. three (3) engine started. Gear had been preflighted by both crew chief and engineer. Ran flaps through full and back to zero. Taxied from hard stand, made one turn to right following taxi strip. Approximately three hundred (300) feet past hard stand and one hundred (100) feet past the turn, the right landing gear collapsed. All switches were cut off. The taxiing speed was about eight (8) M.P.H., at no time had the gear handle been placed in the up position. The left main gear was still locked but the right was unlocked allowing it to collapse.

[Signed] RICHARD H. HOLLRECK, 2nd Lt., Air Corps, Pilot.
[Handwritten] Incl 4.

42-51873 | 1944-11-16

RESTRICTED
HEADQUARTERS 455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF
Office of the Engineering Officer
APO 520 US Army
F-SWT-1 [reading uncertain]
22 November 1944

To Whom It May Concern.

Investigation of the landing gear and landing gear actuateing system on B-24J, Number 42-51873, to determine the cause of the collapse of the right hand main landing gear on subject Aircraft on November 16, 1944, revealed that the landing gear safety lock solenoid, part number CK 32E-5021 [prefix reading uncertain], was jammed in the unlocked position. There were no other damaged or malfunctioning parts on the landing gear or in the actuateing system.

The condition noted above made it possible for the landing gear lever to be moved to the up position while on the ground, which is normally not possible. It is conceivable that this could have occurred accidentally during runup or taxiing without the crew of the ship being aware of the mishap.

[Signed] SARGENT W. TOWER, Captain, Air Corps, Group Engineering.
[Handwritten] Incl 2.

42-51873 | 1944-11-16

740TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
Office of the Engineering Officer
23 November 1944

CERTIFICATE

On the morning of the 16th November 1944, airplane No. 42-51873, taxied from its hardstand, making a turn to the left onto the taxi strip, then moved a short distance to a right turn and traveling approximately fifty feet (50), the right main landing gear began to collapse, allowing the airplane to settle onto the belly of the fuselage and right wing tip, resulting in severe damage to the plane. The pilot was taxiing aircraft at a very reasonable speed and manner. After the plane was lifted back onto the gear, it was checked and all clearances were found to be within tolerance. However after aircraft was moved to the 558th Service Squadron, the landing gear safety solenoid was found to be stuck in the retracted position. With the solenoid in this position it is possible for the landing gear selector handle to be placed in the “up” position; could have contributed to the accident.
An unsatisfactory report is being submitted on the defected landing gear safety solenoid.

[Signed] GEORGE L. RINGSTAD, Capt., Air Corps, Engineering Officer.
[Handwritten] Incl 3.

42-51873 | 1944-11-16

RESTRICTED
OFFICE OF THE ENGINEERING OFFICER
558 AIR SERVICE SQUADRON
APO 520
24 November 1944.

SUBJECT: Damaged parts on airplane B24J, No. 42-51873
TO: All Concerned

1. The following items were damaged in the accident involving airplane B24J, No. 42-51873.

QUANITY [as typed] — UNIT — NOMENCLATURE — PART NO.
2 ea. — Propellor Assy, Hamilton Hydromatic, dia. 11′7″ — 23E50-505
1 ea. — Engine Assy., P & W — R1830-65A
1 ea. — Rudder, tab, & cover Assy. R.H. — 32T10115-R
1 ea. — Stabilizer Assy., Vertical — 32T8050-0
1 ea. — Door Assy., R.H., rear bomb — 32B046-5R
1 ea. — Door Assy., R.H., front bomb — 32B046-4R
1 ea. — Casing, 36″ — 165500
1 ea. — Tube, dual seal, inner, 36″ — 811100
1 ea. — Turret, ball, Sperry — 963110
1 ea. — Bulkhead Assy., sta. 6.0 — 32B2060-6
1 ea. — Rack Assy., R.H., rear bomb — 32F3642-5
1 ea. — Bulkhead, Bomb Bay, R.H., sta. 5.0 — 32B1750-0R
1 ea. — Longeron Assy., Bomb Bay, sta. 5.0 to sta. 6.0 — 32B9014-0
1 ea. — Support Assy., Bottom Turret, sta. 6.1, to sta. 7.0 — 32B1063-0
1 ea. — Longeron Assy., sta. 6.0 to sta. 7.0 — 32B1107-0L
1 ea. — Longeron Assy., sta. 6.0 to sta. 7.0 — 32B1107-0R
1 ea. — Track, bomb door, sta. 6.0 — 32B2060-23L
1 ea. — Track, bomb door, sta. 6.0 — 32B2060-23R

[Signed] ERNEST J. THOMPSON, 1st Lt., Air Corps, Ass’t Engineering Officer.
[Handwritten] Incl 5.
RESTRICTED

42-51873 | 1944-11-16

RESTRICTED
WAR DEPARTMENT — AAF Form No. 54
ARMY AIR FORCES — UNSATISFACTORY REPORT
[Repeated U R along both sides.]
Date submitted: 29-11-44. Station: APO 520. Organization: 740TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H). Subject: O.K. [reading uncertain] SOLENOID ASSEMBLY. Manufacturer: CANNON ELECT. DEV. CO. Aircraft: B-24J #42-51873. Part: LANDING GEAR SOLENOID ASSY. Drawing / specifications: CANNON [number partly obscured] CONS. #32E5021 [reading uncertain]. Total time: 241:00 HRS. Quantity on hand / defective / previous failures: NONE / NONE / NONE. Manufacturer: CANNON ELEC. DEV. CO. Disposition box marked: Disposed of (Explain Below).
EXPEDITE

1. WHILE TAXIING PRIOR TO TAKE OFF, RIGHT MAIN GEAR OF B-24J #42-51873 CAME UNLOCKED CAUSING GEAR TO RETRACT. AIRPLANE WAS RIGHTED AND GEAR LOCKED SATISFACTORILY. ALL CLEARANCES WERE CHECKED AND FOUND WITHIN TOLERANCE. A GROUND RETRACTION TEST PROVED GEAR AND HYDRAULIC SYSTEM TO BE IN WORKING ORDER. HOWEVER, LANDING GEAR SOLENOID SAFETY SWITCH WAS FOUND TO BE STUCK IN THE “IN” POSITION WHICH WOULD ALLOW THE LANDING GEAR SELECTOR HANDLE TO BE MOVED TO THE “UP” POSITION WHILE AIRPLANE WAS ON GROUND. WHETHER OR NOT THE LANDING GEAR LEVER WAS MOVED ACCIDENTALLY CAN NOT BE PROVEN.

2. INSPECTION OF THE SOLENOID ASSY UPON REMOVAL SHOWED THE PLUNGER TO BE BADLY SCORCHED. SCORCHING WAS SO SERIOUS AS TO DEPOSIT A HEAVY FILM ON PLUNGER, CAUSING IT TO STICK TO THE BUSHING WITHIN THE SOLENOID. CONTINUITY TEST OF THE SOLENOID PROVED THE CORE TO BE IN A SATISFACTORY CONDITION. THE CAUSE OF THE SCORCHED APPEARANCE COULD NOT BE DETERMINED. THE POSSIBILITY OF HYDRAULIC FLUID OR OIL BURNING ON THE SOLENOID PLUNGER MAY BE ELIMINATED AS THE AREA IMMEDIATELY AROUND IT WAS CLEAN AND FREE OF SAME.

3. SOLENOID ASSY SENT TO 558TH SERVICE SQUADRON FOR DISPOSITION.

4. THIS IS THE FIRST UNSATISFACTORY REPORT ON THIS CONDITION SUBMITTED BY THIS ORGANIZATION.

[Signed] GEORGE L. RINGSTAD, CAPTAIN, AIR CORPS, ENGINEERING OFFICER.
RESTRICTED
[Handwritten] Incl 7. ROUTING: SEND ORIGINAL AND TWO COPIES DIRECT TO COMMANDING GENERAL, HQ. AIR SERVICE COMMAND, PATTERSON FIELD, FAIRFIELD, OHIO.

42-51873 | 1944-11-16

HEADQUARTERS 455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF
Office of the Technical Inspector
APO 520 US ARMY
H-VJD-1
29 November 1944.

SUBJECT: Aircraft Accident Report, AAF Form No. 14.
TO: Chief Flying Safety, AAF
Winston Salem, N. C.

1. In compliance with Fifteenth Air Force Memorandum 120-5, dated 9 July 1944, enclosed find AAF Form No. 14 with allied papers, on an Aircraft Accident which occured at this Field.

For the Group Commander:
[Signed] VINCENT J. DAMIANO, 2nd Lt., Air Corps, Gp Tech. Inspector.

7 Incl:
Incl 1 - Rept. of Acft. Accident AAF Form 14.
Incl 2 - Ltr., Gp. Engineering Officer.
Incl 3 - Certificate - Sq. Eng. Officer.
Incl 4 - Certificate - Pilot of Acft.
Incl 5 - Ltr. 558th Serv. Sq. - Damaged Parts.
Incl 6 - Med. Off. Rept. of Acft. Accident.
Incl 7 - Unsatisfactory Report.
- 1 -
[The medical officer’s report listed as enclosure 6 is absent from the eight scanned pages in this packet.]

42-51608 | 1944-11-17

WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. Form No. 14
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
RESTRICTED [over CONFIDENTIAL]. 15AF-IN-A1. [Handwritten] Combat; 45-11-17-702; 33964.
Place: Near MONTE-GRANARO, ITALY. Date: 17 Nov 1944. Time: Appro 1400.
Aircraft: B-24H, A.F. No. 42-51608. Station: San Giovanni, Italy. Organization: 15TH, 455 Bomber, 741 Bomber.

PERSONNEL [duty, name, rating, serial, rank, class, result, parachute]
C — REEDER, R; P; Unknown; Major; I C; None; S.
CP, B, N, E, and four G — UNKNOWN; ratings P, B, N, E, G, G, G, G respectively; serials and ranks Unknown. CP, B and N class I C; E and G class I E. All None; S.
R — Rhodes, D. H.; R; 17072608; Sgt; I E; Fatal; No.
[All military personnel: AC (AUS), 15TH.]

Italian Civilian Bystanders [as entered]:
Berdim, Anne — Fatal.
Penigiui, Emilo — Fatal.
Pemgrin, Corestra Teresa — Fatal.
Bellosna, Tommeso — Fatal.
Pemgrin, Luig of Franceso — Major.
Rogoni, Volentim — Major.
Pemgrin, Olementro — Major.
Pemgrin, Odelio — Major.
Pemgrin, Bruno — Major.
Pemgrin, Noyprene — Major.
[This table overlays the pilot section. Visible flight-hour entries read Unknown.]
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Aircraft W; engines W, W, W, W; propellers W, W, W, W.
[Received stamp] DEC 12 1944. [Classification changed to RESTRICTED by authority of CG AAF, 4-1-46.]
Weather: Ceiling and Visibility unlimited, with thin scattered clouds below, Mild winds. Flying on instruments: No. Cleared from San Giovanni to Enemy Targets. Clearance: Believed to be Contact.
Pilot’s mission: Strategic Bombing of Enemy Targets.
Nature: Pilot and crew bailed out of battle damaged aircraft 5 miles south southeast of Aconaa [as typed], leaving body of radio operator on board. After a period of time airplane came in from direction of sea, dived slightly and crashed into farmhouse near Monte-Granaro, Italy.
Cause: Flight controls damaged by flak over target, rudder cables shot out entirely.
RESTRICTED

42-51608 | 1944-11-17

WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. Form No. 14
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
RESTRICTED [over CONFIDENTIAL]. 15AF-IN-A1. [Handwritten] Combat; 45-11-17-702; 33964.
Place: Near MONTE-GRANARO, ITALY. Date: 17 Nov 1944. Time: Appro 1400.
Aircraft: B-24H, A.F. No. 42-51608. Station: San Giovanni, Italy. Organization: 15TH, 455 Bomber, 741 Bomber.

PERSONNEL [duty, name, rating, serial, rank, class, result, parachute]
C — REEDER, R; P; Unknown; Major; I C; None; S.
CP, B, N, E, and four G — UNKNOWN; ratings P, B, N, E, G, G, G, G respectively; serials and ranks Unknown. CP, B and N class I C; E and G class I E. All None; S.
R — Rhodes, D. H.; R; 17072608; Sgt; I E; Fatal; No.
[All: AC (AUS), 15TH. Left edge partly obscured.]

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT — REEDER, R; middle name and serial Unknown; Major; I C; AC (AUS). Assigned and attached for flying: 15TH AIR FORCE, 455 Bomber, 741 Bomber, San Giovanni. Original rating: P, Unknown. Present rating: P, 20 Nov [year obscured]. Instrument rating: Unknown. All flight-hour entries Unknown.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Aircraft W; engines W, W, W, W; propellers W, W, W, W.
[Received stamp] DEC 12 1944. [Classification changed to RESTRICTED by authority of CG AAF, 4-1-46.]
Weather: Ceiling and Visibility unlimited, with thin scattered clouds below, Mild winds. Flying on instruments: No. Cleared from San Giovanni to Enemy Targets. Clearance: Believed to be Contact.
Pilot’s mission: Strategic Bombing of Enemy Targets.
Nature: Pilot and crew bailed out of battle damaged aircraft 5 miles south southeast of Aconaa [as typed], leaving body of radio operator on board. After a period of time airplane came in from direction of sea, dived slightly and crashed into farmhouse near Monte-Granaro, Italy.
Cause: Flight controls damaged by flak over target, rudder cables shot out entirely.
RESTRICTED

42-51608 | 1944-11-17

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

An American airplane B-24H #42-51608, flying crewless, crashed into an Italian farmhouse about 4 miles south of MONTE-GRANARO, ITALY, between the hours of 1400 to 1500 on 17 November 1944. 6 Italian civilians were injuried and 4 killed by the resulting impact and fire that followed. The airplane, livestock and other household property were totally destroyed.

The bomber, piloted by Major REEDER, 455 Bomber Group, was damaged by flak over the target and the radio operator, Sgt D. H. Rhodes, killed. Attempting the return flight to their home base with flight controls badly damaged and rudder cables out entirely, the crew abandoned ship about 5 miles south southeast of Ancona. The body of Sgt Rhodes was left on board the airplane.

In the words of the only witness to the accident, Corporal Moore, 211 Field Company, Royal Engineers (British), “The ship came in from the direction of the sea flying at about 200 feet altitude and apparently in normal flight. A few seconds later it went into a slight dive and crashed nose on into the farmhouse, catching fire at once.” The wreckage, investigated the 18 November 1944 by Service Center Personnel, was found concentrated within the immediate area of the house and still burning. The following Italian Civilians were killed: (Their addresses: Monte Urano, Italy, Via Lonto Moni 3 [street reading uncertain])
a. Penigiui, Emico, 29 years old, female [entry overwritten].
b. Berdim, Anne, 20 years old, female.
c. Pemgrin, Corestra Teresa, 67 years old, female.
d. Bellosni, Tommeso, 70 years old, male.
The following Italian Civilians were injured:
a. Pengrin, Luig of Franceso, 21 years old, male.
b. Rogoni, Volentini, 38 years old, male.
c. Pemgrin, Bruno, 12 years old, male.
d. Pemgrin, Olementro, 43 years old.
e. Pemgrin, Odelio, 4 years old, female.
f. Pemgrin, Noyprene, 16 years old.

The body of the radio operator assumed to be on board at the time of the impact, has not been recovered to date.

All remaining items of the wrecked airplane will be destroyed by the Service Squadron Crew since nothing remains of a salvagable nature.

2 incls:
Incl 1-English translation of Italian.
2-Photos (in dup).

[Signed] A. R. LACHMAN, MAJOR, AIRCORPS, GROUP ENGINEERING OFFICER.
Date: NOV 28 1944.

42-51608 | 1944-11-17

THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF SEVERAL ITALIAN STATEMENT OBTAINED AT THE SCENE OF THE ACCIDENT.

1. On the 16 November 1944, a Liberator dropped on the landed property of Mr. Cout Domenico of Tito living at Monte Granaro. In that accident Penigivi Emico, 20 yrs old died.

2. And also died, Berdim Annie 20 yrs old, woman, Corestie Terene Pemgrin, 67 yrs old, woman. Bellosni Tommeso, 70 yrs old, man, There address: Monte Orano-Vie Lomtu Moni 3 [street reading uncertain].

3. The following were injuried: Pemgrin Lug, of Franceso, 21 yrs old Rogoni Volentim, 38 yrs old, Pemgrin Noyprene, 16 yrs old, Pemgrin Bruno 12 yrs old, Pemgrin, Olementro, 43 yrs old, Pemgrin Odelio, 4 yrs old.

4. The farm was entirely destroyed: and also all the cattle, consequently food, house-hold goods, and tools were lost.

5. The damage is established about 8 o 10 million lire.

[Handwritten] Incl #1 [reading uncertain]. [The translation gives 16 November and an age of 20 for Penigivi. The main report gives 17 November and an age of 29 for Penigiui.]

42-51608 | 1944-11-17

[Two photographs without captions. Upper: wreckage among rubble, with the tail marking 251608 visible. Lower: rubble and portions of the farmhouse walls.]

42-51608 | 1944-11-17

CONFIDENTIAL
HEADQUARTERS
96TH SERVICE GROUP
Office of the Engineering Officer
APO 520
L-2 / 15AF-IN-A1 / 313.6
Service Center #96, 29 November 1944.

SUBJECT: Transmittal of report of Aircraft Accident.
TO: See Distribution.

Pursuant to authority contained in AAF Reg 65-14, dtd 26 May 1942 as amended, the Report of Aircraft Accident for B-24H #42-51608 is transmitted herewith.

For the Commanding Officer:
[Signed for] A. R. LACHMAN, Maj, AC., Gp Engr O.

1 incl:
Incl 1: Rpt of A/C Accident (w/2 incls).

DISTRIBUTION:
1 Cy-Chief, Flying Safety, Winston-Salem, N.C. (Direct)
1 Cy-CG, XV AF, APO 520 (Thru Channels)
1 Cy-CG, XV AFSC, APO 520 (Thru Channels)
1 Cy-CG, 304 Bomber Wing, APO 520 (Thru Channels)
1 Cy-CO, 455 BG, APO 520 (Thru Channels)
CONFIDENTIAL

42-51608 | 1944-11-17

CONFIDENTIAL
HEADQUARTERS
96TH SERVICE GROUP
Office of the Engineering Officer
APO 520 US ARMY
313.6 L-1
SERVICE CENTER NO. 96
15 Jan 1945.

SUBJECT: Corrected Copy of Form 14 Report for B-24H #42-51608.
TO: Headquarters, Chief of Flying Safety, Army Air Forces, Winston - Salem, N.C., U.S.A.

The attached corrected copy of form 14, Aircraft Accident Report, is forwarded in compliance with instructions contained in 1st Indorsement from Headquarters, 15th Air Force, on basic letter, subject, “Transmittal of Report of Aircraft Accident, B-24H #42-51608”, dated 29 Nov 1945 [as typed; preceding letter is dated 1944].

For the Commanding Officer:
[Signed] A. R. LACHMAN, Major, AC, Gp Engr Off.

1 Incl: Form 14 (w/3 Incls)
CONFIDENTIAL

42-52071 | 1944-12-08

AAF Form No. 14 — WAR DEPARTMENT
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
Place: San Giovanni, Italy. Date: 8 December 1944. Time: 0620. Aircraft: B-24J, A.F. No. 42-52071. Station: APO 520, US Army. Organization: 15th AF, 455th Bomb, 740th Bomb.

PERSONNEL [duty, name, rating, serial, rank, class]
P — CROSBY, Donald C.; P; O-822895; 1st Lt; 18.
CP — CARR, Paul; CP; O-711130; 1st Lt; 18.
B — O'MALLEY, Martin D.; B; O-768837; 2nd Lt; 18.
N — MILLER, Robert T.; N; O-1540460; 2nd Lt; 18.
NV — CUMMINGS, John H.; NV; O-663539; 1st Lt; 01.
E — Bathie, Alexander G.; E; 32887976; T/Sgt; 38.
R — Park, Robert E.; R; 33246163; T/Sgt; 38.
AE — Palanuk, William S. [surname reading uncertain]; AE; 39342163; S/Sgt; 38.
AR — Goldberg, Salomon; AR; 33748435; S/Sgt; 38.
G — Eldridge, Gordon G.; G; 34009029; S/Sgt; 38.
G — Karon, Arnold P.; G; 16161853; S/Sgt; 38.
[All: 15th, AC, None, No.]

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT — CROSBY, Donald C.; O-822895; 1st Lt; 18; AC. Assigned: 15th, 455th, 740th, APO 520, US Army. Original rating: Pilot, 2/8/44. Present rating and date: Same. Instrument rating: 6/2/44.
Hours: This type 371:00; this model 285:15; last 90 days 186:35; total [struck through]. Instrument time: dashes. Night last 6 months 48:25; last 30 days 7:25.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Nose compartment damaged. [Penciled ratings faint.]
Weather: CAVU. Flying on instruments: No. Cleared from San Giovanni to Secret. Clearance: Combat. Pilot's mission: Combat.
Nature: Landing Accident.
Cause: Nose wheel did not extend and ship went over on nose.
RESTRICTED

42-52071 | 1944-12-08

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

The aircraft entered traffic in normal manner after completing a combat mission. The main landing gear was checked down and locked by the waist gunner who reported it to the co-pilot. The engineer was in the bomb bay and was not notified wheels were coming down, therefore did not check nose wheel. Landing was made in normal manner with nose held up until nose went down on its own accord due to loss of speed.

The tower did not notice this ship with the nose wheel up as there were formations landing on both runways.

Major cause of accident was pilot error, minor cause was technique.

RECOMMEND all pilots comply with previous briefed training procedure and use check list.

[Signed] WILLIAM E. KEEFER, Lt. Col., A.C. (Investigating Officer).
Date: 13 December 1944.

42-52071 | 1944-12-08

740TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H), AAF,
Office of The Operations Officer
APO 520 U. S. Army
9 December 1944

SUBJECT: Aircraft Accident on Landing.
TO: Whom it May Concern.

1. Called tower for normal traffic after returning from a mission to GRAZ.

2. Tower gave us permission to land and we made a normal traffic pattern. Wheels were put down at (155) MPH indicated air speed. Co-Pilot checked with waist and main gear was down and locked. Gear handle came back to neutral and green light came on. By accident the nose wheel was not checked visually.

3. Called tower on base leg and they gave us permission to land. Landing was normal. We touched the runway at 95 MPH indicated air speed. Nose was held off the ground until it fell of its own accord.

4. Nose wheel had failed to extend and ship went down on its nose and slid to a stop on the runway.

[Signed] DONALD C. CROSBY, 1st Lt. Air Corps, Pilot

42-52071 | 1944-12-08

740TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
Office of The Operations Officer
9 December 1944

SUBJECT: Aircraft Accident on Landing.
TO: Whom it may concern.

1. After returning from night mission to Graz, I went down and stood in bomb bays. Nose was cleared by Navigator. I stood in bomb bays waiting for the nose wheel to go down and had not been notified that the gear was coming down. The flight deck was crowded and I was unable to see that we were in the traffic pattern. The first thing I knew the main gear had touched and before I could notify the pilot the nose had already dropped.

[Signed] ALEXANDER G. BATHIE, T/Sgt, Engineer.

42-78360 | 1944-12-16

WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. Form No. 14
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
Place: Gioia Airfield. Date: 16 December 1944. Time: 14:45. Aircraft: B-24H [as entered], A.F. No. 42-78360.
Station: San Giovanni A/F. Organization: XV AAF, 455th Bomb, 742nd Bomb. (H).

PERSONNEL [name, rating, serial, rank, class, parachute]
UNDERWOOD, George W.; P; O711568; 1st Lt.; 18; NO.
HAYES, Billy D.; CP; O829016; 2nd Lt.; 18; NO.
DONELAN, PAUL R.; N; O1692814; 1st Lt.; 18; YES.
CARLSON, Bruce Jr.; B; O2056775; 1st Lt.; 18; YES.
ANDERSON, Glenn; E; 39618221; T/Sgt.; 38; NO.
WALTER, Arnold H.; RO; 37493205; T/Sgt.; 38; YES.
BOONE, Henry R.; G; 35662037; S/Sgt.; 38; YES.
MASON, Marion L.; G; 34098289; S/Sgt.; 38; YES.
MYLES, Thomas E.; AG; 15382224; S/Sgt.; 38; YES.
GEORGE, Maurice; AE; 34765015; S/Sgt.; 38; YES.
WALLO, Albert O.; PH; 36712017; S/Sgt.; 38; NO.
[All: AC, XV AAF, NONE.]

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT — UNDERWOOD, George W.; O-711568; 1st Lt.; 18; AC. Assigned: XV AAF, 455th Bomb, 742nd Bomb (H), San Giovanni. Original rating date: 8 Feb ’44. Present rating: Pilot [date overwritten]. Instrument rating: 8 Feb. ’44.
Hours: This type 200:00; this model 200:00; last 90 days 100:00; total 200:00 [struck through]. Instrument last 6 months 15:00; last 30 days 02:00. Night last 6 months 02:00; last 30 days 00:00.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Aircraft W; engines and propellers #3 M, #4 M. All stations of fuselage bottom. Salvaged.
Weather: C.A.V.U. Flying on instruments: No. Cleared from San Giovanni A/F to Combat Mission. Clearance: Operational. Pilot’s mission: Bombing.
Nature: Crash belly landing - Left landing wheel and gear missing.
Cause: Aircraft mushed on take off and bounced, breaking off left landing wheel. Upon instructions from Wing Commander plane was flown until gasoline supply was exhausted. Pilot decided to have seven crew members bail out and then brought aircraft to Gioia A.F. for the landing.
RESTRICTED

42-78360 | 1944-12-16

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

PILOT'S STATEMENT
Aircraft mushed after being airborne hitting left gear and mushing on in, hitting the ball turret and left bomb bay door before getting airborne again.
(Sgd.) George W. Underwood
GEORGE W. UNDERWOOD, 1st Lt., Air Corps. Pilot

No statement of responsibility or recommendations for action to prevent repitition as initial accident occured at home field.
[Signed] HAROLD V. PLETTS [surname reading uncertain], Captain, Air Corps, Inspecting Officer.

[Signed] FRANCIS E. McCARTHY, Captain, Air Corps.
Date: [partly obscured] December 1944.

42-78360 | 1944-12-16

[Three photographs of the aircraft and damaged sections. Handwritten identifications as legible, top to bottom:]
41 FG 16 DEC. 44 - 1 - B24-G - 42-78360
41 FG 16 DEC. 44 - 2 - B24-G - 42-78360 [right edge partly cropped]
41 FG - 16 DEC. 44 - [remaining text obscured]
[The photographs identify a B-24G. The Form 14 lists a B-24H.]

42-78360 | 1944-12-16

[Three photographs of the aircraft, personnel, and lifting equipment. Handwritten identifications as legible, top to bottom:]
41 FG - 16 DEC. 44 - 6 - B24G - 42-78360
41 FG - 16 DEC. 44 - 5 - B24G - 42-78360
41 FG - 16 DEC. 44 - [remaining text obscured]

44-48775 | 1944-12-27

AAF Form No. 14 — WAR DEPARTMENT
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Stamped] 81. Place: APO 520. Date: 27 Dec 44. Time: 1440. Aircraft: B-24J, A.F. No. 44-48775. Station: APO 520. Organization: 15th AF, 455th, 742.

PERSONNEL [duty, name, rating, serial, rank, class]
P — THATCHER, ROBERT L.; P; O-678976; 1st Lt; 18.
CP — CASE, ROBERT E.; CP; O-705945; 2nd; 18.
N — KNOWLES, C. D.; N; O-2056421; 2nd; 18.
B — RODRIQUES, R. H.; B; O-2056829; 2nd; 18.
E — Giangarra, C. L.; E; 32419933; S/Sgt; 38.
R — Davis, W. A.; R; 13168675; Sgt; 38.
G — Kraft, J. R.; G; 32834187; Sgt; 38.
G — Dillon, W. F.; G; 36804238; Sgt; 38.
G — Popovich, P. P.; G; 33696846; Sgt; 38.
G — Lillon, R. J. [surname reading uncertain]; G; 36772221; Sgt; 38.
[All: 15th, A/C, NONE, NO.]

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT — THATCHER, ROBERT L.; O-678976; 1st Lt.; 18; A/C. Assigned: 15th AF, 455th, 742nd, APO 520. Original and present rating: Pilot, 4/22/43.
Hours: This type 300:00; this model 200:00; last 90 days 61:20; total 800:00. Instrument and night time: dashes.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Nose wheel damage. [Penciled aircraft rating 3.]
Weather: Scattered clouds at 4000′. Visibility nine (9) miles. Wind NE 10 MPH. Cleared from San GIOVANNI to SECRET. Clearance: Combat. Pilot’s mission: Combat.
Nature: Nose wheel snapped while landing.
Cause: Pilot overshot runway and was unable to stop, partially due to muddy runway. Which resulted in hitting a small ditch which sheared nose wheel strut.
RESTRICTED

44-48775 | 1944-12-27

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

Lt. R. L. THATCHER was pilot of plane #48775. He peeled off in normal manner from the formation and made a normal approach. The Pilot overshot the end of the runway and landed on the last half. It appeared he did not throttle back and had excess landing speed. Officers in the control tower at the time verified the above facts. Due to mud on the steel mat at the end of the runway and speed of landing roll, the nose gear strut snapped on hitting small drainage trough at end of runway.

Damage to plane was a broken main nose gear strut, bombardiers glass broken, two (2) bulkheads bent.

Responsibility for the above accident was 90% pilot error, and 10% field conditions.

[Signed] WILLIAM E. KEEFER, Lt. Col., A/C. [Typed] DAVID S. THAYER, Lt. Col., A/C; FRANCIS C. DORING, Major, A/C.
Date: 10 January 1945.

44-48775 | 1944-12-27

STATEMENT

Returning from a combat mission on 27 December 1944, in plane #448775, the nose wheel was sheared on landing roll. Cause of accident is as follows: Final approach was made at 130 MPH [speed reading uncertain], and because ship was empty and little or no wind, landed farther down the runway than is the usual procedure. My airspeed had decreased to 95 MPH, so I elected to land instead of going around. Runway being very slippery, was unable to apply brakes, plane tended to ground loop or slip to the side of the strip when brakes were applied. End of runway was unrestricted, so I planned to roll a few feet past the end of the [obscured] I should have ample space to stop and turn around. Hit a slight rut, nose being down, the result was a broken nose gear. No further damage was noticed.

[Signed] ROBERT L. THATCHER, 1st Lt, Air Corps, Pilot.

44-48775 | 1944-12-27

STATEMENT

Ship #448775, on 27 December 1944 came in on runway. The landing was smooth and ship failed to slow down soon enough. It rolled off the end of the runway and the nose wheel hit a bump and snapped into the ship. The ship slid to a stop about 50 feet later.

[Signed] CHARLES L. GIANGARRA, S/Sgt, Air Corps, Engineer.

44-48775 | 1944-12-27

HEADQUARTERS
455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Air Inspector
APO 520 US Army
26 January 1945

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Aircraft Accident Report
TO: Chief, Office of Flying Safety, AAF, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Transmitted herewith is report of an aircraft accident that occured at this field.

[Signed] JAMES N. LUTTRELL, Major, Air Corps, Air Inspector.

44-49371 | 1944-12-27

AAF Form No. 14 — WAR DEPARTMENT
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Handwritten] 45-12-27-702.
Place: APO 520. Date: 27 Dec 44. Time: 1420. Aircraft: B-24J, A.F. No. 44-49371. Station: APO 520.
Organization: 15th, 455th, 742.

PERSONNEL [duty, name, rating, serial, rank, class]
P — CHARLES LICHTMAN; P; O-711720; 1st Lt; 18.
CP — VERNE L. [surname obscured]; CP; O-771853; 1st; 18.
N — A. G. LATUS [surname reading uncertain]; N; O-2068283 [reading uncertain]; 2nd; 18.
B — A. V. HARAWAY; B; O-722482; 1st; 18.
E — F. A. Lopetrone; E; 36591240; T/Sgt; 38.
R — H. Sheffield; R; 32983540; Sgt; 38.
G — J. P. Calandrino; G; 36449398; S/Sgt; 38.
G — V. Luty; G; 12084414; S/Sgt; 38.
G — G. E. Hunsicker [surname reading uncertain]; G; 37410550; S/Sgt; 38.
G — J. M. [surname obscured]; G; 34831725; S/Sgt; 38.
[All: A/C, NONE, NO.]

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT — LICHTMAN, CHARLES, NMI; O-711720; 1st Lt; 18; A/C. Assigned: 15th AF, 455th, 742nd, APO 520. Original and present rating: Pilot.
Hours: This type 115:00; this model 90:00; last 90 days 55:00; total 151:25. Instrument and night time: dashes.
[Handwritten] Combat 9 Feb 45 [reading uncertain].
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Class 26.
Weather: Scattered clouds at 4000′. Visibility nine (9) miles. Wind NE 10 MPH. Cleared from San Giovanni to SECRET. Clearance: Combat. Pilot’s mission: Combat.
Nature: Tire blown due to flak, plane ground [remainder faint].
Cause: Flak damage to tire and extreme muddy condition of runway shoulders.
RESTRICTED

44-49371 | 1944-12-27

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

Lt. C. LICHTMAN was pilot of plane #49371. He made a normal approach after peeling out of formation. On landing on the first third of the runway the left tire was found to be flat due to flak. Every effort was made to keep plane on runway, but due to muddy conditions the pilot was unable to keep plane from swerving to the left. On going off the runway the plane spun on the left gear and stopped abruptly due to extreme muddy conditions.

The resulting damage to the aircraft was landing gear twisted and both right and left main and false spars warped.

Responsibility for the accident is 50% combat damage and 50% field conditions.

[Signed] WILLIAM E. KEEFER, Lt. Col., A/C; DAVID S. THAYER, Lt. Col., A/C; FRANCIS C. DORING, Major, A/C.
Date: 10 January 1945.

44-49371 | 1944-12-27

STATEMENT

Just as we hit the runway for a landing in ship #44-49371 on 27 December 1944, we started off the runway, the pilot gave it all the rudder he could, and still no change took place.
The waist gunner said the tire was flat as soon as we hit the runway.

[Signed] FRANK A. LOPETRONE, T/Sgt, Air Corps, Engineer

44-49371 | 1944-12-27

HEADQUARTERS
455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Air Inspector
APO 520 US Army
26 January 1945

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Accident Report
TO: Chief, Flying Safety, AAF, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Transmitted herewith is report of an aircraft accident that occured at this field.

[Signed] JAMES N. LUTTRELL, Major, Air Corps, Air Inspector.

42-51419 | 1945-01-04

[Scan header: THIS PAGE IS DECLASSIFIED IAW EO 13526. Modern identification: 15th AF / 42-51419 / 455th BG - 743rd BS / 45-1-4-702.]

WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. Form No. 14 (Revised May 15, 1943)
U.S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Handwritten: 1-25-45. Accident No. 45-1-4-702.]

(1) Place: GIOIA. (2) Date: 4 January 1945. (3) Time: 1610 A.
(4) Type and model: B-24J. (5) A.F. No.: 42-51419. (6) Station: San Giovanni.
(7) XV AAF. (8) 455th B.G. (H). (9) 743 B. Sq. (H).

PERSONNEL
Duty | Name | Rating | Serial number | Rank | Class
C | MELTON, Donald L. | P | O709603 | 1st Lt. | 18
C | HUNTER, Joe B. | CP | O709144 | 2nd Lt. | 18
C | McCORMICK, John E. | N | O2058312 | 2nd Lt. | 18
C | GARBER, Glenn D. | N | T127568 | F/O | 17
C | BASSETT, Eugene M. | B | O776859 | 1st Lt. | 18
C | SPORS, Albert A. | E | 36817171 | S/Sgt | 38
C | WALKER, William L. | RO | 15335895 | S/Sgt | 21
C | DE WITT, Robert J. | G | 18063759 | S/Sgt | 21
C | ROBERTS, Ernest V. | G | 34808298 | S/Sgt | 38
C | COOK, Alexander | G | 34579824 | S/Sgt | 38
C | AMDOR, Wayne E. | G | 36900895 | Sgt | 38
[All rows: Branch AC; Air Force XV AAF; Result NONE; Parachute NO.]

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT
(20–24) MELTON, Donald L.; O-709603; 1st Lt.; 18; AC.
(25–28) Assigned: XV AAF; 455th B.G.; 743rd B. Sq.; San Giovanni.
(29–32) Attached for flying: [blank].
(33–37) Original rating: Pilot, 8 Feb ’44. Present rating: Same. Date: Same. Instrument rating: 6 March 1944.
(38–41) First pilot hours: This type 750:00; this model 750:00; last 90 days 250:00; total 750:00.
(42–45) Instrument time last 6 months 20:00; last 30 days [dashes]. Night time last 6 months 75:00; last 30 days [dashes]. [Handwritten: Combat.]

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE
(46) Aircraft: W. (47) Engine(s): #4-W; #3-O [letter uncertain]. (48) Propeller(s): #4-W; #3-O [letter uncertain].
(49) List of damaged parts: Aircraft Salvaged.
(50) Weather at the time of accident: [blank].
(51) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident: No.
(52) Cleared from: San Giovanni. (53) To: Combat. (54) Kind of clearance: Combat.
(55) Pilot’s mission: Combat.
(56) Nature of accident: Hydraulic system damaged by flak. Right gear frozen in wheel well. Wheel hit by flak and would not lock in the down position. Emergency landing at Gioia Airfield.
(57) Cause of accident: Flak damage.
[Recovered cover sheet only.]

42-51543 | 1945-01-07

RESTRICTED
WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. Form No. 14
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Stamped] 88. [Handwritten] 45-1-7-501 [reading uncertain].
Place: RAMITELLI AIR FIELD, ITALY [faint]. Date: 7 January 1945. Time: 1445 [faint].
Aircraft: B-24J, A.F. No. 42-51543. Station: APO #520. Organization: 15TH AF, 455TH BOMB [faint], [squadron faint].
PERSONNEL — SURCEY, WM. S.; 14003652; M/Sgt; 925; AAF; XV AF; NONE; NO.
[Classification changed to RESTRICTED by authority of CG AAF, by FCA, 2-12-46.]

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT — Surcey, William S.; 14003652; M/Sgt; 925; AAF. Assigned: 15th AF, 38 Serv [faint]. Attached for flying: Same. Original and present rating: None. Flight hours: None.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Leading edge of right wing (outer panel) from station 16 thru 25. All blades. [Penciled damage ratings partly legible.]
[Weather, clearance, mission, nature and cause fields have no legible substantive entries. Handwritten coding includes 471-7A (last character uncertain).]
RESTRICTED

42-51543 | 1945-01-07

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

M/Sgt WILLIAM S. SURCEY, ASN 14003652, was taxiing aircraft B-24J #42-51543 from a revetment on the northwest side of the field to the 366th Service Squadron maintenance area for repairs on the No. 2 engine. Passing the revetment on the southwest side of the runway, subject aircraft ran into a parked aircraft B-24J #44-40644, shearing off both vertical stabilizers and causing major damage to the fuselage. The brakes did not operate when the sergeant tried to steer the aircraft being moved from the parked aircraft. Damages to the aircraft are listed on the face of the Form #14.

An inspection of aircraft B-24J #42-51543 showed an excessive amount of hydraulic fluid flowing from the overflow and that the fuse in the emergency hydraulic electrical system was blown, causing the failure of the brakes.

It is the decision of the Aircraft Accident Committee that this accident was caused by material failure.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
None.

[Signed] GEORGE S. ROBERTS, Major, Air Corps, President; EDWARD C. GLEED, Capt, Air Corps, Member; JACK D. HOLZCLAW, Capt, Air Corps, Recorder.
EXHIBITS “A” to “D” Attached.

[Signed] JACK D. HOLZCLAW, Capt, Air Corps (Investigating Officer).
Date: 13 January 1945 [day reading uncertain].

42-51543 | 1945-01-07

CONFIDENTIAL
366TH AIR SERVICE SQUADRON
38TH SERVICE GROUP
APO 520
9 Jan 1945.

STATEMENT

At or about 1445, on January 7, 1945, I, M/Sgt William S. Surcey, went to the dispersal area between the 301st and 302nd Fighter Squadrons to taxi aircraft, B-24J, AAF No. 42-51543, to the 366th Air Service Squadron's maintenance area for the exchange of No. 2 engine which had froze in flight. I turned the propeller through on engines Nos. 1, 3, & 4. I then started the energizer, external source of electrical power. I started No. 4 engine and then No. 1 engine. I permitted the engines to warm up, then turned on the emergency hydraulic boost pump and opened the emergency valve. I checked my brake pressure and found it to read about 950 to 1050 lbs. The aircraft was taxiing well and was under control. After I crossed the west end of the runway and moved down the taxi strip near which aircraft, B-24J, 44-40644 was parked, I then realized that the brakes had become ineffective. Knowing that aircraft, B-24J, 44-40644, was parked in the first dispersal area and seeing it, I tried to steer the aircraft to the left by increasing the R.P.M. on No. 4 engine. Inspite of my efforts, the right wing struck the rudder of the parked aircraft, causing the taxiing aircraft to swerve to the right. Cpl Eddie Phillips, sitting in the co-pilot's seat, cut the engines. The momentum carried the aircraft further, damaging the left wing of the parked aircraft. The taxiing aircraft came to a halt a few yards beyond and to the left of the parked aircraft. All switches and the energizer were cut off before the aircraft was vacated.

[Signed] WILLIAM S. SURCEY, 14003652, M/Sgt, 366th Air Ser. Sqdn, Technical Inspector.
EXHIBIT "A" (Surcey)
CONFIDENTIAL

42-51543 | 1945-01-07

CONFIDENTIAL
366TH AIR SERVICE SQUADRON
38TH SERVICE GROUP
APO 520
9 Jan 1945.

SUBJECT: Inspection of Aircrafts.
TO: Operations Officer, 332nd Fighter Group, APO #520.

1. Upon inspection of aircraft, B-24J, 42-51543, which collided with a parked aircraft in a taxiing accident on 7 Jan 1945, the following damages are noted.
a. No. 4 propeller, damaged.
b. Leading edge of right wing, outer panel, damaged at stations 16 through 25.

Investigation revealed an excessive amount of hydraulic fluid flowing from the over-flow and that the fuse in the emergency hydraulic electrical system was blown, causing failure of the brakes. The fuse was exchanged and the emergency hydraulic system worked satisfactorly.

2. Upon inspection of aircraft, B-24J, 44-40644, also involved in the above accident, the following damages are noted:
a. Both verticle stabilizers and rudders, damaged.
b. Tail turret, damaged.
c. Left wing tip, damaged.
d. Fuselage damaged at bulkhead, stations No. 8.0 & 9.0.
e. Horizontal stabilizer, damaged.

[Signed] JOHN H. WILLIAMS, 1st Lt., Air Corps, Engineering Officer.
EXHIBIT “B” (Surcey)
CONFIDENTIAL

42-51543 | 1945-01-07

CONFIDENTIAL
366TH SERVICE SQUADRON
38TH SERVICE GROUP
APO 520 c/o POSTMASTER
New York, N. Y.
EDJ:rwb
21 July 1944.

SQUADRON ORDERS
NUMBER 10

1. In accordance with AAF Reg #62-10, dtd Aug 2, 1943, the following EM, this Org are hereby auth to Pre-Flight and taxi Acrft:

EXTRACT
NAME — RANK — ASN
William S. Surcey — M/Sgt — 14003654 [as typed; the signed statement gives 14003652].

ELMER D. JONES, JR., Capt. Air Corps, Commanding.

DISTRIBUTION
Gp Hq, 38th Serv Gp 1
332nd Fighter Gp Opr 1
Eng O 1
BB 1
Sq File 1
201 22

A TRUE COPY:
[Signed] JOHN H. WILLIAMS, 1st Lt., Air Corps, Engineering Officer.
EXHIBIT “C” (Surcey)
CONFIDENTIAL

42-51543 | 1945-01-07

RESTRICTED
WAR DEPARTMENT — AAF Form No. 54 (Revised 2-18-43)
ARMY AIR FORCES — UNSATISFACTORY REPORT
[Repeated U R along both sides.]
Station Serial No. 45-5. Date submitted: 1-14-45. Station: APO #520. Organization: 366th Air Serv Sqdn, 38th Serv Gp.
Subject: 01-B, Fuse, emergency hydraulic. Manufacturer: Burndy, Eng Co. Aircraft: B-24J, 42-51543. Engine: R-1830-43A.
Part: Fuse, emergency hydraulic, (125 Amps). Part drawing / specifications: GK32E8884 [reading uncertain]. Time in use: Unknown. Quantity on hand: 1. Quantity known defective: 1. Previous failures: 0. Manufacturer: Burndy, Co. Disposition marked: Disposed of (Explain Below).
EXPEDITE

DETAIL OF TROUBLE:
While taxiing, the brakes of aircraft, B-24J, 42-51543, became ineffective. Investigation of brake system on subject aircraft revealed that the emergency hydraulic booster pump limiter, or fuse, located in the right panel, forwarded end of bomb bay, right of door near ceiling, was blown or inoperative.

PROBABLE CAUSE:
Overload of electrical system.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
None.

DISPOSITION:
Electrical system checked and fuse replaced.

[Signed] JOHN H. WILLIAMS, 1st Lt., Air Corps, Engineering Officer.
EXHIBIT “D” (Surcey)
[Overlapping classification stamps.]
ROUTING: SEND ORIGINAL AND TWO COPIES DIRECT TO COMMANDING GENERAL, HQ. AIR SERVICE COMMAND, PATTERSON FIELD, FAIRFIELD, OHIO.

44-40644 | 1945-01-07

CONFIDENTIAL [faint]
WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. Form No. 14 (Revised May 12, 1943)
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Handwritten] 2 Planes; 45-1-7-507 [reading uncertain].
Place: RAMITELLI AIR FIELD, ITALY [faint]. Date: 7 January 1945. Time: 1445.
Aircraft: B-24J, A.F. No. 44-40644. Station: APO #520. Organization: 15TH AF, 455TH BOMB GP, 742ND BOMB SQUADRON (H) [faint].

PERSONNEL [struck through] — SURCEY, WILLIAM S.; 14003652; M/Sgt; 925; AAF; XV AFSC [faint]; NONE; NO.
PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT [section crossed out] — SURCEY, WILLIAM S.; 14003652; M/Sgt; 925; AAF. Assigned: XV AFSC, 38TH SG, 366TH AIR SERVICE, RAMITELLI [faint].
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Fuselage, vertical and horizontal stabilizers, rudders, tail turret and left wing tip. [Penciled ratings.]
Weather: Broken clouds from 3 to 5 thousand feet, moderate southerly winds with 6 miles visibility.
Nature: Taxi accident - Group II.
Cause: Material failure.
(58) Has Form #54 been submitted? Yes.
RESTRICTED [over CONFIDENTIAL]
[This form covers the parked aircraft in the collision described on scan pages 138–143.]

44-40644 | 1945-01-07

[Copy of the same document in the companion packet, scan page 139.]

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

M/Sgt WILLIAM S. SURCEY, ASN 14003652, was taxiing aircraft B-24J #42-51543 from a revetment on the northwest side of the field to the 366th Service Squadron maintenance area for repairs on the No. 2 engine. Passing the revetment on the southwest side of the runway, subject aircraft ran into a parked aircraft B-24J #44-40644, shearing off both vertical stabilizers and causing major damage to the fuselage. The brakes did not operate when the sergeant tried to steer the aircraft being moved from the parked aircraft. Damages to the aircraft are listed on the face of the Form #14.

An inspection of aircraft B-24J #42-51543 showed an excessive amount of hydraulic fluid flowing from the overflow and that the fuse in the emergency hydraulic electrical system was blown, causing the failure of the brakes.

It is the decision of the Aircraft Accident Committee that this accident was caused by material failure.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
None.

[Signed] GEORGE S. ROBERTS, Major, Air Corps, President; EDWARD C. GLEED, Capt, Air Corps, Member; JACK D. HOLZCLAW, Capt, Air Corps, Recorder.
EXHIBITS “A” to “D” Attached.

[Signed] JACK D. HOLZCLAW, Capt, Air Corps (Investigating Officer).
Date: 13 January 1945 [day reading uncertain].

44-40644 | 1945-01-07

[Copy of the same document in the companion packet, scan page 140.]

CONFIDENTIAL
366TH AIR SERVICE SQUADRON
38TH SERVICE GROUP
APO 520
9 Jan 1945.

STATEMENT

At or about 1445, on January 7, 1945, I, M/Sgt William S. Surcey, went to the dispersal area between the 301st and 302nd Fighter Squadrons to taxi aircraft, B-24J, AAF No. 42-51543, to the 366th Air Service Squadron's maintenance area for the exchange of No. 2 engine which had froze in flight. I turned the propeller through on engines Nos. 1, 3, & 4. I then started the energizer, external source of electrical power. I started No. 4 engine and then No. 1 engine. I permitted the engines to warm up, then turned on the emergency hydraulic boost pump and opened the emergency valve. I checked my brake pressure and found it to read about 950 to 1050 lbs. The aircraft was taxiing well and was under control. After I crossed the west end of the runway and moved down the taxi strip near which aircraft, B-24J, 44-40644 was parked, I then realized that the brakes had become ineffective. Knowing that aircraft, B-24J, 44-40644, was parked in the first dispersal area and seeing it, I tried to steer the aircraft to the left by increasing the R.P.M. on No. 4 engine. Inspite of my efforts, the right wing struck the rudder of the parked aircraft, causing the taxiing aircraft to swerve to the right. Cpl Eddie Phillips, sitting in the co-pilot's seat, cut the engines. The momentum carried the aircraft further, damaging the left wing of the parked aircraft. The taxiing aircraft came to a halt a few yards beyond and to the left of the parked aircraft. All switches and the energizer were cut off before the aircraft was vacated.

[Signed] WILLIAM S. SURCEY, 14003652, M/Sgt, 366th Air Ser. Sqdn, Technical Inspector.
EXHIBIT "A" (Surcey)
CONFIDENTIAL

44-40644 | 1945-01-07

[Copy of the same document in the companion packet, scan page 141.]

CONFIDENTIAL
366TH AIR SERVICE SQUADRON
38TH SERVICE GROUP
APO 520
9 Jan 1945.

SUBJECT: Inspection of Aircrafts.
TO: Operations Officer, 332nd Fighter Group, APO #520.

1. Upon inspection of aircraft, B-24J, 42-51543, which collided with a parked aircraft in a taxiing accident on 7 Jan 1945, the following damages are noted.
a. No. 4 propeller, damaged.
b. Leading edge of right wing, outer panel, damaged at stations 16 through 25.

Investigation revealed an excessive amount of hydraulic fluid flowing from the over-flow and that the fuse in the emergency hydraulic electrical system was blown, causing failure of the brakes. The fuse was exchanged and the emergency hydraulic system worked satisfactorly.

2. Upon inspection of aircraft, B-24J, 44-40644, also involved in the above accident, the following damages are noted:
a. Both verticle stabilizers and rudders, damaged.
b. Tail turret, damaged.
c. Left wing tip, damaged.
d. Fuselage damaged at bulkhead, stations No. 8.0 & 9.0.
e. Horizontal stabilizer, damaged.

[Signed] JOHN H. WILLIAMS, 1st Lt., Air Corps, Engineering Officer.
EXHIBIT “B” (Surcey)
CONFIDENTIAL

44-40644 | 1945-01-07

[Copy of the same document in the companion packet, scan page 142.]

CONFIDENTIAL
366TH SERVICE SQUADRON
38TH SERVICE GROUP
APO 520 c/o POSTMASTER
New York, N. Y.
EDJ:rwb
21 July 1944.

SQUADRON ORDERS
NUMBER 10

1. In accordance with AAF Reg #62-10, dtd Aug 2, 1943, the following EM, this Org are hereby auth to Pre-Flight and taxi Acrft:

EXTRACT
NAME — RANK — ASN
William S. Surcey — M/Sgt — 14003654 [as typed; the signed statement gives 14003652].

ELMER D. JONES, JR., Capt. Air Corps, Commanding.

DISTRIBUTION
Gp Hq, 38th Serv Gp 1
332nd Fighter Gp Opr 1
Eng O 1
BB 1
Sq File 1
201 22

A TRUE COPY:
[Signed] JOHN H. WILLIAMS, 1st Lt., Air Corps, Engineering Officer.
EXHIBIT “C” (Surcey)
CONFIDENTIAL

44-40644 | 1945-01-07

CONFIDENTIAL
HEADQUARTERS
332ND FIGHTER GROUP ARMY AIR FORCES
APO 520 U.S. ARMY
A-BOD/ht [reading uncertain]
360.33
15 January 1945.

SUBJECT: Report of Aircraft Accident.
TO: Commanding General, AAF Winston Salem, North Carolina.

In compliance with AAF Regulation 62-14, dated 26 May 1942 as amended by AAF Regulation 62-14A, dated 8 October 1943, transmitted herewith approved Report of Aircraft Accident Form 14 involving aircraft B-24J #44-40644 of which M/Sgt William S. Surcey, 14003652, 366th Air Service Squadron, 38th Service Group, was taxiing.

[Signed] B. O. DAVIS, Jr., Colonel, Air Corps, Commanding.

5 Incls:
Incl #1 - AAF Form 14.
Incl #2 - Statement (M/Sgt Surcey).
Incl #3 - Ltr, Subj: “Insp of AC”
Incl #4 - Sq Orders #10, 366th Serv Sq, dtd 21 July 1944.
Incl #5 - AAF Form 54.
CONFIDENTIAL
[The Form 54 listed here appears in the companion packet on scan page 143.]

42-51938 | 1945-01-19

HEADQUARTERS
455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H), AAF,
APO 520, U. S. Army.
10 March 1945

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Records.
TO: Group Air Inspector.

1. In compliance with Fifteenth Air Force Memorandum 120-5, dated 9 July 1944, transmitted herewith is the Aircraft Accident Report, AAF Form 14 and inclosures on B-24J number 42-51938.
2. Subject report was completed and ready for signature within report time limit, but was lost by Aircraft Accident Board. Personnel of this board was also changed which accounts for the long delay in transmittal.

[Signed] GEORGE E. McCORD, Major, Air Corps, Operations Officer.

1st Ind. — H-JNL-1
Headquarters, 455th Bomb Group, Office of the Air Inspector, APO 520, US Army, 10 March 1945.
TO: Chief, Flying Safety, AAF, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.
Forwarded.

[Signed] JAMES N. LUTTRELL, Major, Air Corps, Air Inspector.
-1-

42-51938 | 1945-01-19

AAF Form No. 14 — WAR DEPARTMENT
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Handwritten] 45-1-19-533; 3-19-45; Y785.
Place: San Giovanni Field. Date: 19 Jan 1945. Time: 1450. Aircraft: B-24J, A.F. No. 42-51938. Station: APO 520. Organization: 15th AF, 455th, 740th.

PERSONNEL [duty, name, rating, serial, rank, class, result]
P — FANE, GABRIEL W.; P; O825814; 1st Lt; 18; Major.
CP — EPPLER, MERWIN A.; CP; O826590; 2nd Lt; 18; Minor.
N — LIVENGOOD, JAMES P.; N; T-129960; F/O; 17; Minor [ditto].
B — POLSKY, NATHAN; B; O2056824; 2nd Lt; 18; Minor [ditto].
E — POTASH, MARTIN D.; E; 32757944; T/Sgt; 38; Minor [ditto].
R — VALUSKA, DAVID; R; 39045779; T/Sgt; 38; Minor [ditto].
AE — BOSCHUNG, HERBERT; AE; 14190713; S/Sgt; 38; Minor [ditto].
G — MACHUGA, JOHN E. [initial reading uncertain]; G; 33711607; S/Sgt; 38; Minor [ditto].
G — JACOBSON, WALDO E.; G; 39920181; S/Sgt; 38; Minor [ditto].
G — HARDISON, HERSHEL H.; G; 38564062; S/Sgt; 38; Minor [ditto].
F — REHRER, CARL E.; F; 15060389; S/Sgt; 38; Major.
[All: 15AF, AC, No parachute use.]

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT — FANE, GABRIEL W.; O825814; 1st Lt; 18; AC. Assigned: 15th AF, 455th, 740th, APO 520, US ARMY. Original rating: Pilot, 3/12/44. Present rating: P, Same [overwritten]. Hours: This type 281:45; this model 274:05; last 90 days 161:10; total [struck through]. Instrument last 6 months 4:00; last 30 days 0:00. Night last 6 months 22:45; last 30 days 0:00.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — A Complete Wreck. [Penciled ratings overwritten.]
Weather: CAVU. Flying on instruments: No. Cleared from San Giovanni to Secret. Clearance: Combat. Pilot's mission: Combat.
Nature: Overshot on landing.
Cause: Engine Failure.
[Handwritten coding] III D; 05-17-34-37-80.

42-51938 | 1945-01-19

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

On 19 January 1945, GABRIEL W. FANE O825814, 1st Lt., Air Corps, crashed landed B-24J No. 42-51938 approximately three (3) miles south of San Giovanni, Italy. Lt. Fane returned early from a combat mission with number 1 engine feathered. At the time the pilot attempted to land there was a 70 degree cross wind from the right of approximately 15-20 miles per hour. Ceiling and visibility were unlimited. The control tower warned the pilot of the cross-wind.

Lt. Fane made an extremely high approach to the runway crossing the near end of the runway with approximately 200 feet of altitude. The pilot overshot but brought the aircraft within 10 feet of the runway approximately two thirds of the distance down the runway. At this point the pilot attempted to go around. The landing gear was retracted and flaps were raised to the 10 degree position (see photograph attached). As the pilot attempted to go around number two engine failed. The pilot then crash landed the aircraft straight ahead.

The pilots mistakes were:
(1) Approach made with far too much altitude making it practically impossible to land the aircraft by the time the middle of the runway was reached.
(2) Failure to correct sufficiently for wind drift.
(3) Flaps were raised too soon thereby causing the aircraft to sink.

Responsibility for this accident is placed as follows:
Pilot error 50 percent.
Weather conditions (strong cross wind) 25 percent.
Mechanical Failure 25 percent.
[Handwritten] III D 05-17-34-37-80.

[Signed] FRANCIS C. DORING, Major, AC; GEORGE E. McCORD, Major, AC; IRVING BETKE, Captain, AC.
Date: 7 March 1945.

42-51938 | 1945-01-19

740TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
Office of the Operations Officer
22 January 1945

SUBJECT: Accident Report.
TO: Whom it may concern.

1. On January 19, 1945 we ground checked ship No. 938 and found the ship satisfactory, on the engine runup and magneto check. [Marked passage, partly obscured] There was noted excessive oil leakage from the breather of No. one (1) engine, on take-off for the mission to Yugoslavia, No. one (1) engine read 270°.

2. At ten thousand feet No. two (2) supercharger ran away and I found that it would remain stable at 28-30″ of manifold pressure. I instructed the engineer to change the amplifier, and turned back the compensating screw to a minimum on the electronic selector. No aid was acquired by this procedure. I continued on the mission with No. two (2) set at 28″ and was able to stay with the formation until we were about across the Adriatic. Since I was pulling a high manifold pressure 38-40″ and 2400 RPM's on the other engines we watched them carefully, particularly No. one (1) engine since I had been warned by a lineman that the engine would fail very shortly. We began to lag behind and I had the bombardier salvo two of our eight bombs into the Adriatic Sea. Shortly thereafter the oil temperature on No. one (1) engine rose steadily to 130°C at which time the oil pressure fell off and the engine was feathered when the pressure reached 50#. We attempted to remain with the formation by juggling power settings and flaps but after ten minutes of falling further behind and losing altitude we set course for the base, at this point, about 25-30 minutes from the target. We salvoed the balance of our bombs in the Adriatic.

3. On the final approach at base, I was unable to set the plane down safely mainly due to a strong crosswind, although I was also coming in high because of the feathered engine. I decided to go around and called for half flaps, applied full power to No. three (3) and four (4) and eased No. two (2) up a little, at which point No. two (2) ran away again. I pulled the throttle back, had the gear raised, airplane retrimmed and started to ease No. two (2) throttle back up to about 30″. I was flying the plane at about twenty (20) feet off the ground building up flying speed when the co-pilot, Lt Eppler pointed out telephone poles just ahead. I raised the plane over the lines and suddenly No. two (2) turbo ran away again and engine completely failed with the prop windmilling and No. three and four (4) sounded as if they were detonating. The plane immediately started to lose altitude and seeing a clear field ahead, I decided to land at once. I called for the copilot to cut off all switches. I gave a crash landing over the interphone, and landed the plane in a tail-low manner, gear up, approximately three miles south of the field.

[Signed] GABRIEL W. FANE, 1st Lt., Air Corps, Pilot.

42-51938 | 1945-01-19

740TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
Office of the Operations Officer
22 January 1945

SUBJECT: Accident Report.
TO: Whom it may concern.

1. On Friday morning January 19th the pilot, co-pilot and myself ground checked plane No. 938 and found it satisfactory except for excessive oil leakage thru oil breather of No. one (1) engine.

2. We took off OK with cylinder temperature on No. one (1) engine reading 270° to 280° on take-off operation of engines. Continuing on our mission we climbed to 10,000 feet and here out No. two (2) supercharger ran away, but was usable not in excess of 30″ of manifold pressure. Climbing to altitude and flying towards our target our No. one (1) engine oil temperature increased steadily. Cylinder head temperature increased gradually and oil pressure dropped. At this point the engine was feathered with oil pressure reading 55# oil, temperature 120° to 130°, and cylinder head temperature about 280°-290°. Juggling power settings and flaps the pilot attempted to stay with the formation but with No. two (2) engine pulling partial power we were unable to stay with the formation and returned to the base.

3. Coming in for a landing with wheels down and locked and 40° of flaps the pilot attempted to land but changed his mind and called for the “Go around” procedure of 20° flaps and gear up at the same time giving full power to No. three (3) and No. four (4) engines, but easing No. two (2) throttle up and again the supercharger ran away pulling over 30″ of manifold pressure. The pilot eased No. two (2) but flying at a very low altitude he pulled up the plane to clear wires at the same time giving a little more power to No. two (2) engine but it failed and here pilot called for “switches off” and “Crash positions” to copilot and crew respectively. We Crashlanded and evacuated all personnel as soon as possible.

[Signed] MARTIN D. POTASH, T/Sgt, Engineer.

42-51938 | 1945-01-19

NAME OF PILOT — FANE, GABRIEL W.
TYPE OF PLANE — B-24J
ACCIDENT NUMBER — 45-1-19-533
[CHARGED TO, OUT and IN columns blank.]

42-51938 | 1945-01-19

[Two photographs of the wreck. Captions, top to bottom:]
455 BG. CRASH - B24J 42-51938 19 JAN 45.
465 BG. CRASH B24-J 42-51938 19 JAN 1945.

42-51938 | 1945-01-19

[Two photographs of the wreck. The first also appears on the preceding scan page. Captions, top to bottom:]
465 BG. CRASH B24-J 42-51938 19 JAN 1945.
455 BG. CRASH B24-J 42-51938 19 JAN 1945.

42-51135 | 1945-03-08

AAF Form No. 14 — WAR DEPARTMENT
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
[Stamped] 60. [Handwritten] 45-3-8-502; 3-27.
Place: APO 520. Date: 8 March 1945. Time: 2100. Aircraft: B-24H, A.F. No. 42-51135. Station: APO 520.
Organization: 15th AF, 455th, 741st.

PERSONNEL [duty, name, rating, serial, rank, class, result]
P — BRUNSON, LEONARD J.; P; O828941; 2nd Lt; 18; None.
CP — MILLER, RICHARD W.; CP; O2062020; 2nd Lt; 18; None.
N — McMAIN, JOHN X. [name reading uncertain]; N; O2066003; 2nd Lt; 18; None.
E — EXCELL, AUSTEN D.; E; 39576198; Sgt; 38; None.
R — BROWN, ARTHUR A.; R; 36745963; Sgt; 38; Minor.
AG — EDDER, JOHN N. [surname reading uncertain]; AG; 18069116; Sgt; 38; None.
[All: 15th AF, AC, no parachute use.]

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT — BRUNSON, LEONARD J.; O828941; 2nd Lt; 18; AC. Assigned: 15th AF, 455th, 741st, APO 520. Original rating: Pilot, 4/15/44. Present rating: P, Same.
Hours: This type 130:40; this model 130:40; last 90 days 40:00; total [struck through]. Instrument last 6 months 2:30; last 30 days 1:30. Night last 6 months 7:15; last 30 days 2:15.
AIRCRAFT DAMAGE — Left Main Gear Out. End of wing badly wrecked, Main Bulkheads out. #1 Prop badly bent. [Penciled ratings and notes.]
Weather: CAVU (NIGHT). Flying on instruments: No. Cleared from San Giovanni to Local. Clearance: Local.
Pilot’s mission: Night Transition Training.
Nature: Landed Short of runway, approximately 150 yds.
Cause: Failure of Hydraulic pump (Engine Driven) Resulting in final approach with 10 degrees of Flaps.
RESTRICTED

42-51135 | 1945-03-08

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

1. On night of 8 March 1945, LEONARD J. BRUNSON, O-828941, 2nd Lt., A.C., Crashed B-24H No. 42-51135 at 2100 hours. No personnel injuries were sustained. [The personnel table records one minor injury.]

2. Take-off was made at 1855 for a local flight practicing radio range procedures. Ceiling and visibility were unlimited, wind was N-NW at 15 MPH. Heading of runway in use was 330 degrees magnetic.

3. Interview with the pilot, co-pilot and engineer revealed the following: Pilot turned on base leg and put down 7-8° of flaps. When pilot turned on final approach he called for full flaps. The co-pilot attempted to put down full flaps but no hydraulic pressure was available and the No. 3 engine manifold pressure and R.P.M. instruments were indicating decreasing settings.
The pilot thought that No. 3 engine was inoperative and knowing that if it were he could not raise the landing gear quickly decided to continue the approach for landing. Pilot gunned engines to keep airspeed up and pull plane closer to the end of the runway. Pilot reported that response to throttles seemed sluggish, further confirming his belief that No. 3 engine had failed. He also stated that airspeed was approximately 140 mph.

4. Investigation of the scene of the accident revealed the following: The aircraft contacted the ground approximately 150 yards short of the end of the runway, hit two small earth embankments, bounced over a one lane road, rolled through turf to end of runway. Wheel tracks show that aircraft was lined up with runway on final approach. As the airplane rolled down the steel matting on the runway the left main gear strut cracked at the collar where the strut enters the engine nacelle, and the left gear collapsed. The aircraft slid off the runway to the left.

5. Engineering check of No. 3 engine revealed no failure of engine. However it was found that the accessory drive which operates the hydraulic pump and tachometer generator had sheared. This would cause loss of hydraulic pressure and affect tachometer readings for No. 3 engine.

6. Conclusions: It is felt that under the circumstances the pilot was justified in attempting to continue approach for landing. Going around at night on three engines (which was pilot’s belief) with landing gear down is not advisable.
Cause of the accident: The aircraft, with only 10° flaps, mushed in short of the runway, damaging left main gear to the extent that it collapsed. Hydraulic pressure failure prevented use of full flaps. Time did not permit use of auxillary hydraulic pump.

7. As this accident occurred at night and the aircraft was immediately removed from crashed position on edge of runway, no photographs are available.

8. Responsibility for this accident is placed as follows:
Material failure - 100 percent.

[Signed] FRANCIS C. DORING, Major, AC; GEORGE E. McCORD, Major, AC; IRVING BETKE, Captain, AC.
Date: 16 March 1945.

42-51135 | 1945-03-08

“On the night of 8 March 1945, at about 1900 hours I approached the field from the south with intentions of making a 360° overhead approach and landing. As I started the turn I put down the wheels and after the engineer checked the wheels I had the co-pilot put down 10° of flaps. By this time I was turning onto the final approach and ordered full flaps. After several tries at putting them down, the co-pilot informed me that we had no hydraulic pressure as we had lost our number three engine. I stated to go around but decided it best to try and make the field as we couldn’t pull up the wheels and it would be too great a strain on the other three engines.

By this time we were approximately 150 feet off the ground, I tried to add more power but didnt get enough response from the three good engines. We landed 150 yards short of the end of the runway in a mound of dirt. This weakened the landing gear in such a manner that the left gear came off just as we hit the runway. I tried to keep the plane straight until I lost the accumulated brake pressure and the ship ground-looped.

[Signed] LEONARD J. BRUNSON, 2d Lt, AC. Pilot.

42-51135 | 1945-03-08

“After a routine night transition flight we let down and entered traffic. Made a usual pattern but were out on final approach. We made a normal go around procedure, every thing worked normal. On down wind leg we let down wheels, and after the engineer checked the main gear, I put down ten (10) degrees of flaps. By this time we were turning on final. Pilot asked for full flaps, but no more flaps would come down. A quick check of instruments showed number three (3) engine out. We started to go around but since the wheels were down and we only had about one hundred and fifty (150) feet, the pilot decided it best to stretch it to the end of the runway. He gave it full power but we were sinking too fast- consequently we hit about one hundred (100) yards before the end of the runway. The impact weakened the left main gear so that it collapsed just as we reached the end of the runway resulting in a ground loop.

[Signed] RICHARD W. MILLER, 2d Lt, AC, Co-Pilot.

42-51135 | 1945-03-08

“On landing from a night practice mission 8 March 1945 at 2100 - in plane #135 and on final approach, our No. 3 engine lost all manifold pressure at 1200 feet. We had 10° of flaps down. When the co-pilot tried to get more flaps, nothing happened. Pilot advanced throttles and tried to pull the plane up. It seemed to me that we were unable to get enough power. I was calling off airspeed at the time. I looked out at #3 engine and checked the brake pressure which was up. The pilots efforts to get enough power to go around seemed to be in vain. The plane kept mushing in and struck the ground short of the runway. This impact damaging the left landing gear and causing it to collapse when we settled to the ground.

[Signed] AUSTEN D. EXCELL, Sergeant, 39576198, Engineer.

42-51135 | 1945-03-08

WAR DEPARTMENT — AAF Form No. 54 (Revised 2-18-43)
RESTRICTED — ARMY AIR FORCES — UNSATISFACTORY REPORT
[Repeated U R along both sides.]
Station Serial No. 45-490. Date Submitted: 17 Mar 45.
Station: APO 520 U.S. Army. Organization: 741st Bombardment Squadron (H) AAF.
Subject: 02-A Engine Assembly. Manufacturer: Buick.
Aircraft: B-24H 42-51135. Engine: R-1830-43 BP-401073.
Last overhaul: New. Hours since: 541:40. Depots and hours at each previous overhaul: None.
Disposition marked: Disposed of (Explain Below).
EXPEDITE

1. Aircraft Serial No. 42-51135 crashed when landing during a night practice mission. During the landing, the pilot reported, he encountered difficulty in lowering flaps due to loss of hydraulic pressure and had no RPM reading on No. 3 engine. An inspection of this engine, Serial No. BP-401073 revealed the engine hydraulic pump and tachometer generator drive gears were not operating, indicating a failure in the accessory drive gear section.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS: None

3. DISPOSAL: Delivered to 558th Service Squadron, APO 520, USA.

4. This is the first (1st) Unsatisfactory report on this condition submitted by this organization.

[Signed] HENRY BURKLE, Captain, Air Corps, Engineering Officer.
ROUTING: SEND ORIGINAL AND TWO COPIES DIRECT TO COMMANDING GENERAL, HQ. AIR SERVICE COMMAND, PATTERSON FIELD, FAIRFIELD, OHIO.

42-51135 | 1945-03-08

HEADQUARTERS
455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Air Inspector
APO 520 US Army
20 March 1945

SUBJECT: Transmittal of AAF Form Number 14
TO: Chief Office of Flying Safety, AAF, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Transmitted herewith AAF Form 14 and allied papers on aircraft accident which occurred at this field on 8 March 1945.

[Signed] JAMES N. LUTTRELL, Major, Air Corps, Air Inspector

42-50419 | 1945-03-17

RESTRICTED WHEN ENTRIES ARE MADE HEREON
WAR DEPARTMENT — AAF Form No. 14 (Rev. 1 Oct. ’44)
ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF MAJOR ACCIDENT
[Routing table, handwritten] Form 14 received 4-16; evaluated 4-23; verified 5-1; checked 4-21; coded 5-1 [entries faint]. Accident no. 45-3-17-517 [reading uncertain]; type B-24H.

Section A — GENERAL INFORMATION
Place: A.P.O. 520, San Giovanni, Italy. Nearest Army airfield: San Giovanni Airfield. Collision with other aircraft: No. Aircraft involved: No. 42-50419 [corrected in pencil]. Date: 3/17/45. Hour: 1530. Day.

Section B — AIRCRAFT
Aircraft no. 42-50419 [corrected]; B-24H. Home station: San Giovanni, Air Field, Y-785. 15th A.F., 304th Wing, 455th Bomb (H), 741st Bomb.

Section C — OPERATOR
WYNNE, JAMES J., 2d Lt., A.C., O-828360, Male; age field 1921 [as entered]. Attached station Y.785, 15, 455 BH [handwritten]. Assigned station A.P.O. 520, 15th A.F., 304th, 455th Bomb (H), 741st. Aeronautical rating: Yes. Present rating: Pilot. Date received: 4/15/44. Normal duty status: Pilot.

Section D — OPERATOR’S FLYING EXPERIENCE
Hours [1st pilot or solo / other pilot or student]: Total 167:15 / 596:30; this type 167:15 / 167:15; this model 48:30 / 48:30; last 90 days 66:15 / 66:15; last 30 days 53:00 / 53:00; last 24 hours 3:30 / 7:00; actual combat 67:00 / 67:00.
Trainee class: 44-D, 213th C.C.T.S. Phase: Combat; dual or copilot 67:00; solo or 1st pilot 33:30. Instrument rating: AAF 8, 10/6/44. On instruments at accident or immediately before: No.
AAF schools: Maxwell Field, Alabama; Bennettsville, S. Carolina; Shaw Field, S. Carolina; Stewart Field, New York; Maxwell Field, Alabama; C.C.T.S., Mt Home, Idaho (July 13 to Dec 14 [reading uncertain]).

Section E — PERSONNEL INVOLVED [duty, name, rating, serial, class]
P — Wynne, James J.; P; O-828360; 18.
CP — Gavigan, Richard N.; CP; O-928248; 18.
N — Johnson, Gerald O.; N; O-2072387; 18.
E — Clark, Murphy J.; [blank]; 6288034; 20.
R — Samhorst, Roy G. [surname reading uncertain]; [blank]; 15097502; 38.
AG — Gray, Richard H.; [blank]; 35922431; 38.
[All: AC, 15th AF, None, no parachute use.]
RESTRICTED WHEN ENTRIES ARE MADE HEREON

42-50419 | 1945-03-17

Section F — DAMAGE
1. To aircraft: Aircraft was totally wrecked. [Penciled 4.]
2. To engine [1–4]: 3, 3, 1, 1.
3. To propeller [1–4]: 3, 3, 1, 1.
4. To private property: [blank].

Section G — POWER PLANT FAILURE
9. Statement of operator: See Incl No. 1.
10. Statement of engineering officer, mechanic, and others: See Incl No. 2.
[Other fields blank.]

Section H — AIRFRAME, LANDING GEAR, OR OTHER MATERIEL
[Blank.]

Section I — SPECIAL EQUIPMENT
[Blank.]

42-50419 | 1945-03-17

Section M — DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

1. On 17 March 1945, JAMES J. WYNNE, 2nd Lieutenant, ASN O-828360 taxiied B-24H, No. 42-50419 off taxi strip. No personnel injuries were sustained.

2. Weather at time of accident (1530) was as follows: Ceiling at 4,000 ft. established by broken clouds. Visibility nine (9) miles. Scattered showers, wind 6 - 8 MPH.

3. Pilot had landed after flying a practice formation mission. A light rain shower was over the airfield. Pilot turned off runway at end of landing roll and began to taxi to hardstand. At point where taxi strip makes 30 degree turn just before reaching the hardstand for this aircraft the pilot made a turn of approximately 15 degrees and taxiied aircraft into ditch beside taxi strip. The left main gear hit a culvert and the strut was broken. Aircraft settled down on left wing tip and bottom of fuselage. Left outer wing panel, fuselage bulk heads, No. 1 and 2 propellers, left main gear were all severely damaged. Aircraft was salvaged.

4. Pilot stated in interview that rain drops on windshield restricted his vision. However the pilot’s side window was open. Other pilots taxiing at same time had no difficulty.

5. Responsibility for this accident is placed as follows:
Pilot error - 80%
Weather - 20%

6. Recommendations:
Pilots should be impressed more strongly with the necessity for alertness and carefulness while taxiing on narrow taxi strips.

[Handwritten] I T; 12-21-80.
Recommendations: See Par. 6 above. Action Taken: [blank].
ACCIDENT INVESTIGATING BOARD [signed]
President: FRANCIS C. DORING, Major, 741st Bomb Sq.
Member: IRVING BETKE, Captain, 740th Bomb Sq.
Member: GEORGE E. McCORD, Major, Hq. 455th Bomb Gp.
Medical Officer: FRANK V. THOMPSON, Major, Hq. 455th Bomb Gp.
Intelligence Officer: ALVIN L. COONS, Major, Hq. 455th Bomb Gp.

42-50419 | 1945-03-17

Section J — AIRPORT AND FACILITIES AND AIRWAYS
1. Explain: None.

Section K — WEATHER
2. Weather at time of accident (1530) was as follows: Ceiling at 4,000 feet established by broken clouds. Visibility nine (9) miles. Scattered showers, wind 6-8 MPH.
[Signed] DAVID W. WOLF, Captain, AC. APO 520 San Giovanni.

Section L — GENERAL INFORMATION
Mission: Practice Formation. Fire upon crashing: No. Violations of orders or regulations: None. Disciplinary action: None. Clearance: X-C, from San Giovanni to X-C. Photos attached: No.

42-50419 | 1945-03-17

AFTER COMPLETION OF LANDING ROLL, I CALLED TO CO-PILOT TO LOCK CONTROLS TO MAKE TAXIING EASIER. WE STOPPED ON TAXI STRIP BEHIND AIRCRAFT #23 TO ALLOW SAID AIRCRAFT TO PARK ON ITS HARD STAND. DURING THIS TIME CO-PILOT COMPLETED AFTER LANDING CHECK AND HE OPENED SIDE WINDOW. I PROCEEDED TO TAXI AIRCRAFT ALONG TAXI STRIP IN WESTERLY DIRECTION TO HARDSTAND WHERE IT WAS NORMALL ALL PARKED [reading uncertain] AIDED BY CO-PILOT AND ENGINEER. AFTER COMPLETION OF RIGHT HAND TURN FROM ONE TAXI STRIP TP ANOTHER, I FELT SHIP LURCH HEAVILY TO LEFT AND BELIEVED THAT THE LEFT MAIN GEAR HAD COLLAPSED. IN A MATTER OF SECONDS I SMELLED GASOLINE FUMES VERY STRONGLY AND ORDERED ALL MEN TO LEAVE AIRCRAFT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. AT THAT TIME OF THE ACCIDENT I BELIEVED TO BE IN A SAFE POSITION ON THE TAXI STRIP.

[Signed] JAMES J. WYNNE, 2D LT, AIR CORPS, PILOT.

42-50419 | 1945-03-17

AFTER TURN ONTO TAXI STRIP AT NORTH END OF EAST RUNWAY, I COMPLETED AFTER LANDING CHECK, AND OPENED COCKPIT WINDOW WHEN PILOT STOPPED AIRCRAFT TO ALLOW AIRCRAFT #23 TO TURN INTO ITS HARDSTAND. HAVING COMPLETED AFTER LANDING CHECK, WHEN PILOT COMMENCED TAXIING AGAIN, I ADVISED HIM AS TO POSITION OF SHIP ON TAXI STRIP TO BEST OF MY ABILITY AS WAS CUSTOMARY WHILE TAXIING. UPON COMPLETION OF TURN ONTO TAXI STRIP HEADING TO 419'S HARD STAND SHIP APPEARED TO BE IN SAFE POSITION ON TAXI STRIP. AS SOON AS LEFT MAIN GEAR COLLAPSED I CUT ALL SWITCHES AND FOLLOWED NAVIGATOR IN ABANDONING AIRCRAFT ON PILOTS ORDER.

[Signed] RICHARD N. GAVIGAN, 2D LT, AIR CORPS, CO-PILOT.

42-50419 | 1945-03-17

WE HAD LANDED IN VERY BAD RAINY WEATHER AND WERE ON THE TAXI STRIP NEAR THE HARDSTAND WHEN WE RAN IN A DITCH ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE TAXI STRIP. THE PILOT'S AND CO-PILOT'S VISIBILITY WERE VERY INADEQUATE AND AFTER MAKING CERTAIN WE WERE IN THE NEAR CENTER OF THE TAXI STRIP, I LEANED DOWN FROM THE HATCH AND TOLD THEM WHERE THE HARDSTAND WAS ABOUT 75 YARDS AWAY. THEY SAID THEY COULD SEE IT AND AS I LOOKED UP OUT OF THE HATCH AGAIN THE PLANE WENT INTO THE DITCH. IT WAS RAINNING VERY HARD AT THE TIME OF THE CRASH MAKING VISIBILITY OF ALL CONCERNED EXTREMELY DIFFICULT.

[Signed] MURPHY J. CLARK, S/SGT., 6288034, ENGINEER.

42-50419 | 1945-03-17

HEADQUARTERS
455th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Air Inspector
APO 520 US Army
10 April 1945

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Aircraft Accident Report
TO: Chief, Office of Flying Safety, AAF, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Transmitted herewith is report of an aircraft accident that occurred at this field on 17 March 1945.

For the Air Inspector:
[Signed] JOSEPH A. CARLWICZ [surname reading uncertain], 1st Lt., Air Corps, Supply and Maintenance Inspector.

44-41105 | 1945-04-09

RESTRICTED WHEN ENTRIES ARE MADE HEREON
WAR DEPARTMENT — AAF Form No. 14 (Rev. 1 Oct. ’44)
ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF MAJOR ACCIDENT
[Routing entries] Form 14 received 4-25; evaluated 4-28; verified 5-3; checked 5-1; coded 5-2 [faint]. Type: B-24J. Accident number [faint].

Section A — GENERAL INFORMATION
Nearest Army airfield code Y785. Collision with other aircraft: No. Aircraft involved: 44-41105. Date: 4/9/45. Hour: 1535 [faint]. Day.
Section B — AIRCRAFT
44-41105, B-24J. Home station: San Giovanni, Y785. 15th AF, 455th Bomb (H). Last overhaul, depot and hours since overhaul: None [faint].
Section C — OPERATOR
Combs, Robert E. [faint, see personnel table]. Attached station Y785, 15th AF, 455th Bomb (H). Assigned: Same [handwritten]. Rating: Pilot.
Section D — OPERATOR’S FLYING EXPERIENCE
Hours [1st pilot or solo / other pilot or student]: This model 122:00 / 139:20; last 90 days 99:10 / 92:45 [second entry faint]; last 30 days 42:50 / 41:55 [faint]; last 24 hours 3:25 / 3:25 [faint]; actual combat [first entry unclear] / 66:15. Other flight-hour totals too faint to verify. On instruments: No.

Section E — PERSONNEL INVOLVED [duty, name, rating, serial, grade and branch]
P — Combs, Robert E.; P; O-494656; 1st Lt AC.
CP — Bliss, Wilson V.; P; O-783697; 2nd Lt AC.
N — Hill, Jerry C.; N; O-2060991; 1st Lt AC.
EG — Wonnell, Earl E.; EG; 37505139; T/Sgt AC.
AE — Castles, James H.; G; 36640629; S/Sgt AC.
W — Cronan, Edward P.; W; 31230321; Cpl AC.
G — Holeman, Allen L.; G; 37704109; S/Sgt AC.
W — Rein, Charles A.; W; 15350936; Sgt AC.
X — Rabens, Theodore A.; X; 33241531; Cpl Inf; Co L, 349 Inf.
[Air Corps personnel assigned 15th, 455th BG (H). Enlisted class 38. Parachute use marked Yes; success marks faint. The injury column contains Minor and ditto marks followed by None and ditto marks, with pencil corrections. The narrative reports no injuries.]
RESTRICTED WHEN ENTRIES ARE MADE HEREON

44-41105 | 1945-04-09

Section F — DAMAGE
To aircraft: A COMPLETE WRECK. Engines and propellers: four penciled 4s in each row [reading uncertain].
Section G — POWER PLANT FAILURE
Fuel octane: 100. [Signed] DEAN O. GRIFFITH, Captain, AC. San Giovanni.
Section H — AIRFRAME, LANDING GEAR, OR OTHER MATERIEL [blank].
Section I — SPECIAL EQUIPMENT [blank].

44-41105 | 1945-04-09

Section J — AIRPORT AND FACILITIES AND AIRWAYS [blank].
Section K — WEATHER
Ceiling broken at 3000′. Higher broken. Visibility unrestricted. Wind 120° 10 knots at 2500′ [altitude faint]. [Signed] DAVID W. WOLF, Captain, AC. San Giovanni.

Section L — GENERAL INFORMATION
Mission: Test Flight. Fire upon crashing: Yes checked, No circled and crossed by pencil. Violations: None. Clearance: Local, from San Giovanni, to Local; last departure San Giovanni. UR Form 54 field has faint handwritten entry. AAF Forms 1, 1A attached: No. Photos attached: No.

44-41105 | 1945-04-09

Section M — DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

On 9 April 1945 ROBERT E. COMBS, 1st Lt., AC, ASN O494656 and crew parachuted from B-24J No. 44-41105 which exploded in the air soon after the crew left the aircraft. No personnel injuries were sustained.

The aircraft had an engine change at ZARA, YUGOSLAVIA. It had then been flown back to the home base where it was carefully checked and inspected by the Squadron Engineering Section.

Lt. COMBS Took off at 1445B on a routine test flight to put more slow time on the new engine. The nose wheel would not retract after take-off as it was cocked to one side. The aerial engineer and the ground crew chief attempted to straighten the nose wheel but were unable to do so. While attempts were being made to repair the nose wheel, a fire began under the flight deck on the right side across from the A.P.U. Fire extinguishers were emptied at the flames but with the nose wheel doors still open no progress could be made in extinguishing the fire.

The pilot gave the order to abandon the aircraft. All crew members parachuted successfully.

The aircraft went into a turn, a wing came off, and the airplane exploded before it hit the ground.

The cause of the fire in flight is undetermined.
[Handwritten] III R; 61-85.
Recommendations: None. Action taken: None.

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATING BOARD — San Giovanni
[Signed] FRANCIS C. DORING, Major, 741st Bomb Sq., President; IRVING BETKE, Captain, 740th Bomb Sq., Member; GEORGE E. McCORD, Major, Hq. 455th BG, Member; FRANK V. THOMPSON, Major, Hq. 455th BG, Medical Officer; ALVIN L. COONS [middle initial reading uncertain], Major, Hq. 455th BG, Intelligence Officer.

44-41105 | 1945-04-09

STATEMENT OF ACCIDENT [faint]
9 April 1945.

1. At 14[illegible] the engines were started on AC 44-41105, and [illegible] take-off was made at 1445 to the North. When we were on the down wind leg, the tower called and said our nose wheel was still down. This was checked by the engineer and it was found that the nose wheel was cocked approximately forty-five degrees to the left. The wheel could not be pulled around, so we called the tower and asked that they call engineering to have someone come up to the tower that might be able to give us some information on the nose wheel. When we had circled the field about three times, and the nose wheel clamp [illegible] the main gear retracted, with the nose wheel full down so the engineer and crew chief could work on it. At about 15[illegible] approximately, there was a fire that broke out under the flight deck next to the bulkhead going into the bomb bay on the right side. After using three fire extinguishers type CO2 which had no effect, the order to bailout was given. The plane was set on C-1 Auto pilot and as the Co-pilot left the ship, I left to go out through the bomb bay, the right bulkhead was burned through and flames were running along the cat walk. When I stepped out on the cat walk to jump out, the end next to the bulkhead broke loose and I went [obscured] on out. The time was approximately 1545, and as my chute opened up [obscured] start a slow climbing turn at the top of which the right wing seemed to come off and the ship went into a spin to the right in the middle of which it blew up about three miles away.

[Signed] ROBERT E. COMBS, 1st Lt., Air Corps, Pilot.

44-41105 | 1945-04-09

STATEMENT OF ACCIDENT [faint]
9 April 1945.

1. The engineer Sgt Wonnell notified me that the nose gear would not retract because the nose wheel was cocked. The pilot instructed me to stay on VHF to receive instructions on the condition from the control tower. Meanwhile the engineer and Cpl Cronan started disconnecting the shimmy damper linkage in an attempt to straighten the nose wheel. Suddenly there was a sheet of flame [partly obscured] from under the flight deck. I grabbed the carbon dioxide fire extinguisher [faint] on the flight deck and emptied it on the fire with little effect. I ran back and got the carbon dioxide fire extinguisher stored in the waist compartment and emptied that on the fire but the fire was beyond control. On instructions from the pilot I went back to the waist compartment and abandoned ship by way of the main entrance hatch.

[Signed] CHARLES A. REIN, Sgt, AC, Crew Chief.

44-41105 | 1945-04-09

HEADQUARTERS
455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Air Inspector
APO 520 US Army
19 April 1945

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Aircraft Accident Report
TO: Chief, Office of Flying Safety, AAF, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Transmitted herewith are the Forms 14 and 205 on an aircraft accident which occurred at this field on 9 April 1945.

For the Air Inspector:
[Signed] JOSEPH A. CAREWICZ [surname reading uncertain], 1st Lt., Air Corps, Supply and Maintenance Officer.
[The Form 205 mentioned in this letter does not appear in the seven scanned pages.]

44-50468 | 1945-04-12

RESTRICTED WHEN ENTRIES ARE MADE HEREON
WAR DEPARTMENT — AAF Form No. 14 (Rev. 1 Oct. ’44)
ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF MAJOR ACCIDENT
[Stamped] 48. [Routing] Form 14 received 4-30; evaluated 5-10; verified 5-17; checked 5-21 [faint]; coded 5-14. Type B-24M. Accident number [faint].

Section A — GENERAL INFORMATION
Place: San Giovanni. Nearest airfield code Y785 [handwritten]. Collision with other aircraft: No. Aircraft involved: 44-50468M. Date: 4-12-45. Time: 1030. Day.
Section B — AIRCRAFT
44-50468; B-24 M, series 44. Home station: San Giovanni. 15th AF, 304th Wing, 455th Bomb (H), 740th. Date of manufacture: 12-29-44. Total hours: 221:20. Last overhaul, depot, and hours since overhaul: None.
Section C — OPERATOR
Harris, James T.; 2nd Lt; AC; O-835640; M; age field 1923 [as entered]. Assigned San Giovanni, 15th, 304th, 455th Bomb (H), 740th. Aeronautical rating: Yes. Present rating: Pilot. Date received: 8-4-44. Normal duty: Pilot.
Section D — OPERATOR’S FLYING EXPERIENCE
Hours [1st pilot or solo / other pilot or student]: Total 533:50 / 331:20; this type 304:20 / 49:40; this model 1:35 / 00:00; last 90 days 154:40 / 00:00; last 30 days 81:10 / 00:00; last 24 hours 00:00 / 00:00; actual combat 55:00 / 00:00. Instrument rating: B-24, 26 Jan 45. On instruments at time of accident: No.
Section E — PERSONNEL INVOLVED [duty, name, rating, serial, grade, class, result]
P — Harris, James T.; P; O-835640; 2nd Lt AC; 18; Fatal.
CP — Blackwell, Wilbur D.; CP; O-833000; 2nd Lt AC; 18; Fatal.
N — Slawett, Samuel H. [surname reading uncertain]; N; O-2075323; 2nd Lt AC; 18; Fatal.
B — Shelton, Charles R.; B; T-131621; F/O; 17; Fatal.
E — Krumrey, Delmer L.; —; 37678316; Cpl; 38; Fatal.
R — Edghill, William C.; —; 32983558; Cpl; 38; Fatal.
AG — Rehkamp, Donald F.; —; 17144009; Cpl; 38; Minor.
AE — Smith, Robert; —; 36466775; Cpl; 38; Minor.
G — Roberts, Thomas C.; —; 34242978; Cpl; 38; None.
G — Armato, Peter W.; —; 16196036; Cpl; 38; None.
[All assigned 15th, 304th, 455th (H). No parachute use.]
RESTRICTED WHEN ENTRIES ARE MADE HEREON

44-50468 | 1945-04-12

Section F — DAMAGE
To aircraft: Totally wrecked. Aircraft rating 4. Engines and propellers: 4, 4, 4, 4 each [penciled].
Section G — POWER PLANT FAILURE
Operator’s statement: Not available. Octane rating of fuel: 100.
Section H — AIRFRAME, LANDING GEAR, OR OTHER MATERIEL [blank].
Section I — SPECIAL EQUIPMENT [blank].

44-50468 | 1945-04-12

Section J — AIRPORT AND FACILITIES AND AIRWAYS
[Entry too faint to verify.]
Section K — WEATHER
High thin overcast of cirrostratus. Visibility six (6) miles. Haze. Surface wind WSW, 16 MPH.
[Signed] DAVID W. WOLF, Captain, AC, SAN GIOVANNI, ITALY.
Section L — GENERAL INFORMATION
Mission: COMBAT. Fire upon crashing: No. Violations: None. Disciplinary action: None. Clearance: COMBAT, from SAN GIOVANNI to SECRET. Station of last departure: SAN GIOVANNI. Forms 1, 1A attached: No [marked; Form 1A appears on scan page 184]. Photos attached [no clear check; photos appear on scan page 186].

44-50468 | 1945-04-12

Section M — DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

1. At approximately 10:00 hours, 12 April 1945, JAMES T. HARRIS 2nd Lt., AC, ASN O-835640, Pilot, began take-off on a combat mission in B-24M, ASN 44-50468. The aircraft crashed at end of take-off run. Six crew members were killed, four were slightly injured.

2. At the time of the accident ceiling was unlimited, visibility was six miles. Wind was WSW at 16 - 18 MPH with gusts. Take-off was on runway heading 150° magnetic.

3. The pilot made a normal take-off run. The nose wheel was lifted off the ground at proper airspeed. Interview of slightly injured waist gunner disclosed that the main gear lifted about six inches off the runway, then the airplane settled back on to runway. When main gear touched ground after airplane settled the wheels seemed to be locked. The tower Officer stated that the nose wheel was off the ground in normal take-off position. It is believed that the following sequence of events took place:
a. Take-off began in normal manner.
b. Airplane took off.
c. Pilot used brakes to stop rotation of main gear.
d. Airplane settled back to runway with brakes on.
e. Nose wheel hit runway hard and collapsed.
f. Airplane slid forward on nose section and main gear. Marks on runway indicate this.
g. Airplane slid off end of runway and through field for about 150 yards until it hit a low dirt embankment on side of small road.
h. Airplane was up ended into vertical position on nose section.

4. The entire nose section was demolished but investigation disclosed that throttles were full forward, turbos were set properly, trim tabs were set properly, half-flaps were down.

5. Application of brakes before aircraft was definitely airborne is considered to be the cause of the accident.

RECOMMENDATIONS
All pilots should be instructed on dangers of retracting main gear too soon and of applying brakes too soon after take-off.
Action Taken: Above recommendation disseminated to all pilots of this organization.
[Handwritten] II M; 04-.

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATING BOARD
[Signed] FRANCIS C. DORING, Major, 741st Bomb Sq., President; IRVING BETKE, Captain, 740th Bomb Sq., Member; GEORGE E. McCORD, Major, Hq. 455th Bomb Gp., Member; FRANK V. THOMPSON, Major, Hq. 455th Bomb Gp., Medical Officer; ALVIN L. COONS [middle initial reading uncertain], Major, Hq. 455th Bomb Gp., Intelligence Officer.
[The narrative reports four slight injuries. The personnel table lists two Minor and two None among the four survivors.]

44-50468 | 1945-04-12

WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. FORM NO. 1A (REV. 1 JAN. 44)
AIRPLANE FLIGHT REPORT - ENGINEERING

INSPECTION STATUS [handwritten entries]
Preflight and daily: 3/11/45; station APO 520. 25 hours: 225:40 [reading uncertain]; 50 hours: 228:00 [reading uncertain]; 100 hours: 225:00 [reading uncertain].
Auxiliary equipment: Bombardment and Gunnery Z [inspector surname reading uncertain]; Communications E, ERWIN [reading uncertain]; Radar D, Dortch. Station APO 520. Status today: B [handwritten].
SERVICING AT STATION OF TAKE-OFF
First service: fuel in tanks 2700 gallons; oil in tanks Nos. 1–4, 16 each [handwriting uncertain]. Second service: fuel serviced 1890 [reading uncertain], in tanks 2700; oil serviced 16, 16, 20, 20; in tanks 16, 16, 16, 16 [handwriting uncertain].
AIRCRAFT AND ENGINE TIME RECORD
Aircraft and engines: Hours to date 205:30; today 6:50; total 212:20 [some repeated figures faint].
REMARKS, PILOTS AND MECHANICS
#1 Free Air Temp out Pilot: Maj H A [surname unclear].
Oil [unclear]; gas [unclear].
Pilot’s free air temp installed - M/Sgt Betsinger [surname reading uncertain].
Dual A.P.Q. 9 installation complete with antennas installed total weight 283 lbs. Sgt Dortch [readings uncertain].
Date: 3/11/45. Station: APO 520. Crew chief/engineer: M/Sgt Betsinger [surname reading uncertain].
15TH AF, 304TH Wing, 455TH (H), 740TH (B)(H).
Component AAF. Aircraft model B-24M; serial 44-50468. Engine model R-1830-43; serials CP322473, CP322461, CP322478, CP322588 [handwriting uncertain].

44-50468 | 1945-04-12

740TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
Office of the Operations Officer
16 April 1945

SUBJECT: Accident Report.
TO: Whom it May Concern.

1. On the morning of the 12th of April 1945, we were ready to take-off at approximately 1015 hours. We were going down, and had reached the steel matting at the South end of the runway, and it seemed as though the plane would not rise. At one time it seemed to be off the ground about six (6) inches or more and then settled, brakes were applied and released. The second time the brakes were applied the nose wheel collapsed causing the plane to skid on its nose for a considerable distance. After skidding beyond the runway the ship hit a ditch, nosing over in a vertical position.

[Signed] PETER W. ARMATO, Cpl., Gunner.

44-50468 | 1945-04-12

[Two mounted photographs. The upper image shows the tail raised and nose down. The lower image shows the aircraft from the other side. Both captions identify B-24M 44-50468. The upper caption reads “12 APRIL 1945.” The lower date is partly obscured.]

44-50468 | 1945-04-12

HEADQUARTERS
455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Air Inspector
APO 520 US Army
23 April 1945

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Aircraft Accident Report
TO: Chief, Office of Flying Safety, AAF, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Transmitted herewith is the report of an aircraft accident which occurred at this field on 12 April 1945.

For the Air Inspector:
[Signed] JOSEPH A. CAREWICZ [surname reading uncertain], 1st Lt., Air Corps, Supply and Maintenance Insp.

42-51645 | 1945-04-27

RESTRICTED WHEN ENTRIES ARE MADE HEREON
WAR DEPARTMENT — AAF Form No. 14 (Rev. 1 Oct. ’44)
MISSING AIRCRAFT REPORT — ARMY AIR FORCES
[Routing] Form 14 received 5-16; other dates faint. Type B-24J.
Section A — GENERAL INFORMATION
Aircraft involved: 42-51645. Date: 4/27/45. Day checked. [Time field blank.]
Section B — AIRCRAFT
42-51645, B-24J, series 42. Home station: San Giovanni. 15th AF, 455th Bomb Gp (H), 742nd (H). Wing entry struck through. Date of manufacture: 8 July 1944. Total hours: 581:35. Last overhaul, depot, and hours since overhaul: None.
Section C — OPERATOR
Scramlin, James D.; 1st Lt; AC; O-2062312; M; 23. Assigned San Giovanni, 15th, 455th Bomb Gp (H), 742nd (H). Present rating: Pilot. Date received: 6/27/44. Normal duty: Pilot.
Section D — OPERATOR’S FLYING EXPERIENCE
Hours [1st pilot or solo / other pilot or student]: Total 236:00 / 462:00; this type 236:00 / 164:20; this model 151:40 / 34:55; last 90 days 97:00 / 59:00; last 30 days 28:00 / 27:35 [second entry faint]; last 24 hours 2:10 / 2:15; actual combat 46:00 / 45:45.
Section E — PERSONNEL INVOLVED [duty, name, rating, serial, grade, class]
P — Scramlin, James D.; P; O-2062312; 1st Lt AC; 18.
CP — Buchanan, Harry H.; P; O-2063908; 2nd Lt AC; 18.
N — Boyle, Frederick J.; B; O-2064394; 1st Lt AC; 18.
B — Slominski, Frederick A.; B; T-129096 [struck through, reading uncertain]; F/O [struck through], AC; 17.
[Handwritten correction below the table appears to give a new serial and 2ND LT.]
E — Haffner, John C.; E; 36687310; Sergeant; 38.
R — Lyon, Kenneth L.; R; 11111702; Sergeant; 38.
[All assigned 15th, 455th Bomb (H). Result Unk and ditto marks, with pencil annotations. See the subsequent correction request.]
RESTRICTED WHEN ENTRIES ARE MADE HEREON

42-51645 | 1945-04-27

Section F — DAMAGE
To aircraft: Missing. Aircraft rating 4. Engines and propellers: 4, 4, 4, 4 each [penciled].
Section G — POWER PLANT FAILURE
Octane rating of fuel: 100. [Signed] DEAN O. GRIFFITH, Captain, AC. San Giovanni.
Section H — AIRFRAME, LANDING GEAR, OR OTHER MATERIEL [blank].
Section I — SPECIAL EQUIPMENT [blank].

42-51645 | 1945-04-27

Section J — AIRPORT AND FACILITIES AND AIRWAYS [blank].
Section K — WEATHER
See weather below.
7/10 Stratocumulus at 6,000 ft. and 3/10 cirrostratus at 20,000 ft. [upper altitude faint]. Visibility unrestricted.
[Signed] DAVID W. WOLF, Captain, Air Corps.
Section L — GENERAL INFORMATION
Mission: Practice Bombing Mission. Fire upon crashing: No circled. Violations: none. Clearance: Local, from San Giovanni to Local. Station of last departure: San Giovanni. Forms 1, 1A attached: No. Photos attached: No.

42-51645 | 1945-04-27

Section M — DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

On 27 April 1945 at 0930A B-24J, number 42-51645, piloted by 1st Lt. JAMES D. SCRAMLIN O2062312, took-off on a practice bombing mission to Bombing Range No. 4 (39°43′N, 16°32′E) and failed to return.

Hq 304th Bomb Wing and Hq Fifteenth Air Force were immediately notified of this mission aircraft. British Air Sea Rescue and the Italian Navy went out in search. The following morning, 28 April 1945 a plane from this Headquarters was dispatched to aid in the search but poor weather hindered the efforts and no trace of the aircraft or its personnel could be found.

Last contact with ship 645 was made at approximately 1045A, 27 Apr 45 when bombing instructions were relayed to another aircraft of this Group. At this time Lt. SCRAMLIN reported his altitude as 5700 feet with an overcast to 1500 feet. He was in no apparent trouble. Later however Lt WINTERS [surname reading uncertain], another pilot returning from the bombing range reported having seen heavy black smoke coming up through the overcast.

[Handwritten] III-U; 85.
Recommendations and action taken: [blank].
ACCIDENT INVESTIGATING BOARD
[Signed] FRANCIS C. DORING, Lt. Col., 741st Bomb Sq., President.

42-51645 | 1945-04-27

HEADQUARTERS
455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Air Inspector
APO 520 US Army
8 May 1945

SUBJECT: Transmittal of AAF Form 14
TO: Chief, Office of Flying Safety, AAF, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Transmitted herewith is the AAF Form 14 on an aircraft of this group that is missing.

For the Air Inspector:
[Signed] JOSEPH A. CAREWICZ [surname reading uncertain], 1st Lt., Air Corps, Supply and Maintenance Insp.

42-51645 | 1945-04-27

CORRECTION REQUEST
Accident No. 45-4-27-507.
Title of item to be corrected — From — To [faint handwriting]
Injury of all personnel — missing — fatal.
Damage — [ditto] — wreck [reading uncertain].
[Unsafe acts and unsafe conditions tables blank. Submitter’s entry faint.]
[Handwritten] (over).

42-51645 | 1945-04-27

[Handwritten on reverse of correction request]
Corrections made in compliance with Adjutant General’s letter dated 28 July 1947.

42-51645 | 1945-04-27

NAME OF PILOT — SCRAMLIN, JAMES D.
TYPE OF PLANE — B-24
ACCIDENT NUMBER — 45-4-27-507
CHARGED TO — Miss Efird [surname reading uncertain]. OUT 10/3/47. IN 10/3.
[Remaining routing rows blank.]

44-49404 | 1945-04-27

RESTRICTED WHEN ENTRIES ARE MADE HEREON
WAR DEPARTMENT — AAF Form No. 14 (Rev. 1 Oct. ’44)
ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF MAJOR ACCIDENT
[Routing] Form 14 received 5-11; checked 5-14. Type B-24L. Accident number faint.

Section A — GENERAL INFORMATION
Place: STORNARA AAB, APO 520, U.S. Army. Nearest Army airfield: STORNARA. Collision with other aircraft: No. Aircraft: 44-49404. Date: 27/4/45. Time: 1145B [suffix faint]. Day.
Section B — AIRCRAFT
44-49404, B-24L. Home station: STORNARA AAB, APO 520, U.S. Army. 15th AF, 304th Bomb Wing (H), 456th Bomb (H), 745th Bomb. Date of manufacture: Unknown.
Section C — OPERATOR
Penney, Donald E.; 1st Lt.; AC; O-833512 [serial reading uncertain]; M; age field 1924 [as entered]. Assigned Stornara AAB, APO 520, 15th, 304th, 456th Bomb (H), 745th. Aeronautical rating: Yes. Present rating: Pilot, 10/7/1944 [date reading uncertain]. Normal duty: Pilot.
Section D — OPERATOR’S FLYING EXPERIENCE
Hours [1st pilot or solo / other pilot or student]: This type 377:00 / 190:30 [readings uncertain]; this model 100:30 / 1:00; last 90 days 201:50 / 3:00; last 30 days 78:00 / 0:00; last 24 hours 00:00 / 0:00; actual combat 177:00 / 28:00 [readings uncertain]. Total row too heavily inked to verify. Instrument rating: B-24, 27/9/1944. Last check date: 27/9/1944. On instruments: No.
Section E — PERSONNEL INVOLVED [duty, name, rating, serial, grade, class]
P — Penney, Donald E.; P; O-833512 [reading uncertain]; 1st Lt AC; 18.
CP — Nimmo, Jeter; P; O-711500 [reading uncertain]; 2d Lt AC; 18.
NV — Hindman, J. D. [surname reading uncertain]; N; O-2060614; 1st Lt AC; 18.
B — Zemanek, Johnny E. [surname reading uncertain]; B; O-2068316 [reading uncertain]; 1st Lt AC; 18.
E — Riedy, J. J., Jr.; E; 32941683 [reading uncertain]; T/Sgt; 38.
[All: 15 AF, 456 BG (H), None, no parachute use.]
RESTRICTED WHEN ENTRIES ARE MADE HEREON

44-49404 | 1945-04-27

Section F — DAMAGE
To aircraft: Right main tire blown; nose wheel strut broken. To engines, propellers and private property: None.
Section G — POWER PLANT FAILURE [blank].
Section H — AIRFRAME, LANDING GEAR, OR OTHER MATERIEL
Main landing gear casing had been mounted on aircraft on one previous landing. On this landing the right main landing gear tire failed, but investigation of the tire and tube did not reveal the cause of the failure, due to the condition of the tire and tube.
[Signed] HENRY F. SIMMS, Capt, AC, 745th Bombardment Squadron (H).
Section I — SPECIAL EQUIPMENT
None.

44-49404 | 1945-04-27

Section J — AIRPORT AND FACILITIES AND AIRWAYS [dashes].
Section K — WEATHER
4/10 stratocumulus at 3,500 ft.; 6/10 altostratus at 15,000 ft.
[Signed] JOHN W. ADLER, 2nd Lt, AC, Base Weather Officer, STORNARA AAB.
Section L — GENERAL INFORMATION
Mission: Training. Fire upon crashing: No. Violations: No. Disciplinary action: None. Clearance: Verbal orders. Local. Station of last departure: STORNARA AAB. UR Form 54: FS 45-1106, date [month and day faint] 1945. Forms 1, 1A attached: Yes. Photos attached: Yes [marked; no photographs in the eleven scanned pages].

44-49404 | 1945-04-27

Section M — DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

Pilot of aircraft 404 approached the field for a normal landing. Upon contact with the ground, the ship's right main gear tire went flat. When the ship had been brought under control, the pilot was instructed by the Control Tower to attempt to clear the runway, in accordance with existing field Standard Operating Procedures.

When the edge of the runway was reached, the nose-wheel of the ship caught in the drainage ditch bordering the runway and collapsed. A formation was in the process of landing when the accident occured; hence the desire to clear the runway quickly.

The ditch at all other points along the runway is sufficiently shallow to allow aircraft to cross in the event of an emergency such as this. Deepness of the ditch at the particular point where the accident occured is assumed to have been caused by erosion.

Recommendations: Recommend that drainage ditches be checked frequently for depth along runway edge.
Action taken: Ditch partially filled.
[Handwritten codes] I-T [reading uncertain]; 63; 82.

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATING BOARD
[Signed] SAMUEL W. PARKS [first name reading uncertain], Lt Col, 746 Bomb Sq (H), President; DAVID E. CAREY, Lt Col, Hq. 456th Bomb Gp, Member; WILLIAM E. TERRY [name reading uncertain], Major, Hq. 456th Bomb Gp, Member; EUGENE A. ANDRICK [name reading uncertain], Major, Hq. 456th Bomb Gp, Medical Officer; GILBERT W. SMITH, Major, Hq. 456th B Gp, Intelligence Officer; PAUL A. DOHERTY [name reading uncertain], Capt, Hq. 456th Bomb Gp, Recorder.

44-49404 | 1945-04-27

WAR DEPARTMENT — A.A.F. FORM NO. 1A (REV. 1 JAN. 44)
AIRPLANE FLIGHT REPORT - ENGINEERING
Inspection: Preflight and daily 4-27-45, APO 520. [Hour-due entries faint.] Auxiliary equipment entries for bombardment, gunnery, communications, navigation, radar, and Gee. Readable inspector names include Tierney, Fletcher, Smith and Freitag [readings uncertain].
Servicing: Fuel in tanks appears 2200 gallons. Oil entries present in all four tanks [figures faint].
Explanation: Co-pilot's Heater Igniter plug inop.
Remarks [partly illegible]: APU removed & replaced [remainder faint]. Work [faint], M/Sgt White [reading uncertain]. #1 Right Main Tire Blown. Nose wheel strut broken on landing. Left accumulator will not stay charged.
Aircraft time: 399:40 to date, 1:35 today, 401:15 total. Engine total entries: 401:15, 421:30, 401:15, 401:15 [readings uncertain].
Certified Correct True Copy [signature faint], Capt AC.
Date 4-27-45. Station APO #520. Crew chief/engineer: S/Sgt Smith [reading uncertain]. 15th AF, 304th Wing, 456th Bomb (H), 745th Bomb (H). Component: Bombardment. B-24L, 44-49404.
Engine model R-1830-43. Serial nos. CP-317559, CP-417762, CP-300881, CP-313614 [handwriting uncertain].
[Handwritten] Incl 7.

44-49404 | 1945-04-27

745TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
Office of the Operations Officer
APO 520
27 April 1945

STATEMENT

We approached the runway for a normal landing with full flaps, at approximately 130 M.P.H. As soon as the ship was on the runway it began to pull hard to the right, and the nose went down so that the nose wheel was on the ground, though I held the control wheel full back, and about 6-8° of up elevator trim [figure reading uncertain]. I applied full left rudder, and immediately added left brakes, when the plane continued to drag to the right. Right outboard throttle was also applied.

The plane was thus kept on the runway, near the right side, until it had slowed considerably. At instructions from the tower, we added power to keep rolling and turned right off the runway. A ditch at the edge of the runway snapped the nose wheel, and the right main wheel had already passed over the ditch. We stopped immediately, since we were moving very slowly.

The engines and all the switches were cut, and gear handle placed down.

[Signed] DONALD E. PENNEY, 1st Lt., AC, Pilot.

44-49404 | 1945-04-27

745TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
Office of the Operations Officer
APO 520
27 April 1945

STATEMENT

Coming in for a landing in 404, we made a normal approach of approximately 130 M.P.H. and the instant the wheels touched the ground, the plane started turning to the right, and at the same time the nose wheel came down. The pilot had the wheel well locked but still the nose wheel was pressed hard against the runway. As the plane continued turning, the pilot applied full left rudder and left brake. Later the throttle was applied on the #4 engine to help keep the plane straight. We had slowed down considerably when the tower instructed us to turn off the runway to the right. After turning to the right, we ran into a small ditch which caused the nose wheel to cave in.

We cut the engines, locked the controls and put the gear handle in the down position.

[Signed] JETER NIMMO, 2nd Lt., AC, Co-Pilot.

44-49404 | 1945-04-27

745th BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
Office of the Operations Officer
APO 520
27 April 1945

STATEMENT

At 1145, 27 April, B-24 No. 404 made a landing to the South. The wheels touched the ground near the north end of the runway. About 1/4 of the way up the runway the right tire went flat. The ship was pulled to the right side of the runway, but did not leave until it almost stopped moving.

The Tower Operator instructed the pilot to pull the ship off to the right side, but when he tried it there was not enough forward motion to compensate for the flat tire and the drainage ditch which is beside the runway. The nose wheel hit the drainage ditch, collapsed, thus stopping the ship.

The tail of the ship extended over the edge of the runway, so the field was closed until the ship was moved, 1150-1310. There was a 15 mile an hour head wind at the time of the landing.

[Signed] HOWARD H. EGGERT, S/Sgt, Control Tower Operator.

44-49404 | 1945-04-27

WAR DEPARTMENT — AAF FORM NO. 54 [faint]
UNSATISFACTORY REPORT
[Repeated UR around form.]
Station serial no.: FS-45-1106 [last digit faint]. Date submitted: 3 May 1945.
Station: APO #520 U.S. ARMY. Organization: 745TH BOMB SQ (H) 456TH BOMB GP (H).
Subject: 04-B CASING, MAIN LANDING 56″. Manufacturer: FIRESTONE.
Aircraft: B-24L 44-49404.
Part: CASING, MAIN LANDING GEAR 56″, PART # 083150 [reading uncertain], SER. # TR-043482 [reading uncertain].
Time in use: 2 LANDINGS. Quantity on hand: 5. Quantity known defective: NONE. Previous failures: NONE.
Disposition: Disposed of (Explain Below) [marked].
[Continuation follows on the next scan page.]

44-49404 | 1945-04-27

WAR DEPARTMENT — AAF Form No. 54
[Repeated UR around form.]

1. SUBJECT CASING WAS MOUNTED ON THE RIGHT MAIN LANDING GEAR OF AIRCRAFT TYPE B-24L SERIAL NUMBER 44-49404, AND HAD EXPERIENCED ONE LANDING PREVIOUS TO THE FAILURE.

2. DURING A NORMAL LANDING FOLLOWING A PRACTICE MISSION, THE AIRPLANE VEERED SHARPLY TO THE RIGHT, WENT OFF THE RUNWAY, AND WAS FINALLY HALTED BY A DRAINAGE DITCH, WHICH SEVERED THE NOSE LANDING GEAR OLEO STRUT.

3. INSPECTION DISCLOSED FAILURE OF THE RIGHT MAIN LANDING GEAR TIRE HAD BEEN CAUSE OF THE AIRCRAFT GOING OUT OF CONTROL, BUT THE CONDITION OF THE TIRE AND TUBE WAS SUCH THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE THE CAUSE OF THE FAILURE.

4. PROBABLE CAUSE: UNKNOWN.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS: UNKNOWN.

6. DISPOSITION: SUBJECT CASING WAS TURNED OVER TO THE 561ST AIR SERVICE SQUADRON, 43RD AIR SERVICE GROUP FOR SHIPMENT TO DEPOT.

[Signed] HENRY F. SIMMS, CAPTAIN, AIR CORPS, ENGINEERING OFFICER.

44-49404 | 1945-04-27

EXTRACT OF FORM 1
Date: 4-27-45. Station: APO 520 [faint]. Group: 456th [faint]. Aircraft model: B-24L [faint].
[Side certification partly legible] I certify that this is a true [illegible] the original form 1.
[Name entries, with uncertain readings in brackets:]
Penney, Donald E., 1st Lt.
Nimmo, Jeter, 2nd Lt.
Hindman, J. D., 1st Lt. [surname reading uncertain].
Zemanek, Johnny E., 1st Lt. [surname reading uncertain].
[Unclear surname], Harold N., 1st Lt.
Riedy, J. J., Jr., T/Sgt [faint].
[The flight and landing columns and most handwritten duty and serial entries are too faint for reliable transcription. The crew roster on scan page 196 supplies corroborating entries for five names.]

42-51597 | 1945-05-10

WAR DEPARTMENT — AAF Form No. 14 (Rev. 1 Oct. ’44)
ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF MAJOR ACCIDENT
RESTRICTED WHEN ENTRIES ARE MADE HEREON

A — GENERAL INFORMATION: San Giovanni, Italy. Nearest Army airfield: San Giovanni. Collision: No. Aircraft 42-51597. Date 5-10-45, 1015 B, day.
B — AIRCRAFT: 42-51597, B-24 J, series 42. Home station San Giovanni. 15th AF, 304th Wing, 455th Bomb (H), 740th. Last overhaul and depot: None. Hours since overhaul field: 527:55 [faint].
C — OPERATOR: Szerlip, Jacob L.; 1st Lt.; AC; O-828827; M; age field 1922 [as entered]. Assigned San Giovanni, 15th, 304th, 455th Bomb (H), 740th. Aeronautical rating Yes; Pilot, received 4-15-44; normal duty Pilot.
D — FLYING EXPERIENCE [first / other]: Total [first struck through] / 536:55; this type 88:40 / 299:35; this model 73:40 / 241:35; last 90 days 71:50 / 45:30; last 30 days 55:15 / 00:00; last 24 hours 2:00 / 00:00; combat 53:00 / 94:15.
E — PERSONNEL: Jacob L. Szerlip, Norbert E. Collette, Martin D. Potash, David Valuska, Waldo E. Jacobson, Hershel H. Hardison, Herbert Boschung, John E. Machuga, Lewis J. Barberi, Guy T. Watson, Robert J. Danaher, William O. Carey. [Several identifiers are faint on this copy. See the flight record on scan page 211 for the handwritten entries. Officer class 18; enlisted class 38; no parachute use.]

42-51597 | 1945-05-10

F — DAMAGE: Salvage. [Aircraft 4; engines and propellers 1, 1, 1, 1 each, penciled.]
G — POWER PLANT FAILURE [no substantive entry].
H — AIRFRAME, LANDING GEAR, OR OTHER MATERIEL [blank].
I — SPECIAL EQUIPMENT [blank].

42-51597 | 1945-05-10

J — AIRPORT AND FACILITIES AND AIRWAYS [blank].
K — WEATHER: Ceiling unlimited, visibility unrestricted. Surface wind NW 5 MPH.
DAVID W. WOLF, Captain, Air Corps [faint].
L — GENERAL INFORMATION: Training Flight. Fire upon crashing: No. Clearance: Test Hop, Local; station of last departure San Giovanni [faint].

42-51597 | 1945-05-10

M — DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

At approximately 10:15 Hours 10 May 1945, JACOB L. SZERLIP, 1st Lt., ASN O-828827, Pilot collapsed nose wheel on landing after completing a training flight in B-24J No. 42-51597. No personnel injuries were sustained. Landing was on runway heading 330° Mag.

At the time of the accident the ceiling was unlimited, visibility unrestricted, and Surface wind NW 5 MPH.

The pilot made a normal landing. Nose wheel tire blew after runing down runway approximately 100 feet. Pilot applied breaks too soon and collapsed nose wheel. It is believed the following sequence of events took place.
a. Landing was made in a normal manner.
b. Nose wheel was not held off runway long enough.
c. Tire blew after running down runway a short way.
d. Breaks were applied just after tire blew.
e. Nose wheel collapsed.
f. Ship slid to a stop with nose on runway.

Entire lower nose section was demolished, but investigation disclosed that nose wheel lock was in place and safety locking device was attached in its proper place.

Application of breaks just after nose tire blew caused gear structure to collapse. This is considered to be the cause of the accident.

Recommendations: All pilots should be instructed on the danger of applying breaks severely when aircraft is traveling at a high rate of speed.
Action Taken: Above recommendation disseminated to all pilots of this organization.
[Handwritten] IV-F; 04; 4/61; 63.
Board, San Giovanni, APO 520: FRANCIS C. DORING, Lt. Col.; IRVING BETKE, Captain; GEORGE H. [surname obscured]; FRANK V. THOMPSON, Major; ALVIN L. COONS, Major.

42-51597 | 1945-05-10

AIRPLANE FLIGHT REPORT - OPERATIONS — A.A.F. FORM NO. 1 (REV. 1 JAN. 44)
5-10-45; APO 520 USA; crew chief or aerial engineer T/Sgt Potash. 455th Bomb Gp (H), 740th Bomb Sq (H). B-24J, 42-51597.
[Name, grade and serial as legible]
Szerlip, Jacob L., 1st Lt, O-828827.
Collette, Norbert E., 1st Lt, O-700430.
Potash, Martin D., T/Sgt, 39045779 [as written].
Valuska, David, T/Sgt, 39045779.
Jacobson, Waldo E., S/Sgt, 39920181.
Machuga, John E., S/Sgt, 33711607.
Hardison, Hershel H., S/Sgt, 38564062.
Boschung, Herbert, T/Sgt, 14190713.
Barberi, Lewis J., S/Sgt, 12134824 [reading uncertain].
Watson, Guy T., T/Sgt, 35482338 [reading uncertain].
Danaher, Robert J., Sgt, 37585201 [reading uncertain].
Carey, William O., S/Sgt, 13173779 [reading uncertain].
[Two officers class 18, remaining personnel class 38. Each line shows 2:00. From APO 520 at 08:15; to Local at 10:15; mission T; one landing; flight time 2:00.]

42-51597 | 1945-05-10

740TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
Office of The Operations Officer
12 May 45
SUBJECT: Aircraft accident, crashed on landing.
TO: Whom it may concern.

1. While flying plane 597 on a training flight on May 10, 1945, a regular approach to the field was used. The main gear was checked by crew members in waist, and I checked nose gear hitting the tire with my fist and after gear was lowered, the lock was put in place. The pilot landed the plane and we started to roll on three wheels when a flapping noise was heard under the flight deck. I went down to check when suddenly the ship went down on it’s nose as the nose gear collapsed. The switches were turned off and crew cleared from the plane immediately.

[Signed] T/Sgt MARTIN D. POTASH, Engineer.

42-51597 | 1945-05-10

740TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
Office of The Operations Officer
12 May 45
SUBJECT: Aircraft accident, crashed on landing.
TO: Whom it may concern.

1. While flying plane 597 on a training flight on May 10, 1945, a regular approach to the field was used. Wheels were lowered on down wind leg and checked down and locked by engineer. Tower called that wheels were down and locked on base leg. A normal approach was made. Main gear hit near end of the steel mat, and nose wheel was lowered as plane rolled off of mats. Plane rolled straight and regular for perhaps one hundred yards, when a flappery noise was herd as if the nose wheel tire was flat. The engineer went down to investigate but the tire then went flat and the ship went down on it’s nose. The ship rolled straight down the runway to a stop. Switches were turned off immediately and the nose went down. The brakes were not applied until the nose definately had hit the runway. No one was injured in the accident.

[Signed] JACOB L. SZERLIP, 1st Lt., A. C., Pilot.

42-78453 | 1945-05-24

WAR DEPARTMENT — AAF Form No. 14 (Rev. 1 Oct. ’44)
ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF MAJOR ACCIDENT
[Stamped 56. Routing: received 6-11, evaluated 6-14, verified 6-16, checked 6-13.]
A — Aviano, Italy; no collision; 5/24/45, 16:15, day.
B — B-24G, 42-78453, home station San Giovanni Air Field, Italy. 15th AF, 304th Wing, 455th Bomb Gp (H), 743rd B. Sq. Total 832:30; last overhaul field: New.
C — McGrath, William F., 1st Lt., AC, O827707, male, 23; assigned San Giovanni, 15th AF, 304th, 455th Bomb Gp (H), 743rd B. Sq. Aeronautical rating Yes; Pilot; normal duty Pilot.
D — First pilot hours: total 750; type 500; model 50; last 90 days 90; last 30 days 30; last 24 hours 10; combat 130. Charleston, S.C. Phase 1, 2, 3; dual 1; solo 22. On instruments: No.
E — PERSONNEL [duty, name, serial, rank]
P — William F. McGrath, O827707, 1st Lt.
CP — Clarence Van Zile, O2001953, 1st Lt.
N — Robert M. Hamill, O2064253, 1st Lt.
E — Clarence E. Hughey, 39576223, T/Sgt.
R — Robert E. McGill, 42007458, T/Sgt.
[AC, 15th AF, 455th Bomb Gp, 743rd Bomb Sq (H). Injury No; parachutes No.]

42-78453 | 1945-05-24

F — DAMAGE: All Bomb Bay doors need repair. Fuse box damaged. To engines, propellers, and private property: None.
G — POWER PLANT FAILURE: Duration of flight since last take-off 2 hours 15 minutes.
H — AIRFRAME, LANDING GEAR, OR OTHER MATERIEL [blank].
I — SPECIAL EQUIPMENT [blank].

42-78453 | 1945-05-24

J — AIRPORT AND FACILITIES AND AIRWAYS [blank].
K — WEATHER: Local Thunder Showers — Ceiling 1500 ft — Visibility 4 miles — Wind 8–15 MPH with gusts [overtyped and partly obscured].
DAVID W. WOLF, Captain, AC - San Giovanni.
L — GENERAL INFORMATION: Cargo Mission. Fire: No. Violations: None. Clearance: Freight Hauling, San Giovanni to Aviano, last departure San Giovanni. [Handwritten UR note partly illegible.]

42-78453 | 1945-05-24

M — DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

Upon landing and while applying the brakes, the cargo in the front bomb bay slid from the platform and about six (6) cases fell through the bomb bay doors. Fuse box at #4 station was also damaged.

PROCEEDINGS OF BOARD
1. At approximately 1615 hours 24 May 1945, WILLIAM McGRATH, 1st Lt, ASN O827707, Pilot - landed on a Freight hauling mission, in B-24G #42-78453. The cargo broke loose on landing. No personnel were injured.
2. At the time of the accident there were local thunder showers with ceiling at 1500 feet. Visibility 4 miles. Wind from SW at 8 - 15 MPH with gusts.
3. The pilot made a normal landing. The nose wheel was held off the runway until excess speed was reduced; as breaks were applied the cargo in the bomb bay broke loose. It is believed that the following sequence of events took place:
(a) The plane landed in the normal manner.
(b) The nose wheel was held off the runway until excess speed was reduced.
(c) Breaks were applied.
(d) Cargo broke loose from the front bomb bay. Six (6) cases fell through the bomb bay doors.
4. The front bomb bay doors were pulled loose from rollers. Fuse box at #4 station was also damaged.
5. The rope that held the cargo in place became unfastened, when the breaks were applied 6 boxes of cargo fell through bomb bay.

Recommendations: All pilots should be instructed to check cargo and see that the method of securing it is satisfactory and there is no possibility of rope coming untied.
Action Taken: Above recommendation disseminated to all pilots of this organization.
[Signed] IRVING BETKE, Captain, HQ. 455th BG (H).

42-78453 | 1945-05-24

AIRPLANE FLIGHT REPORT - OPERATIONS — A.A.F. FORM NO. 1
24 MAY 1945; APO #520; crew chief or aerial engineer T/SGT CLARENCE E. HUGHEY; 455TH BOMB GP. (H), 743RD BOMB SQ. (H); B-24G 42-78453.
18 — McGRATH, WILLIAM F., 1ST LT., O827707, P.
18 — VANZILE, CLARENCE, 1ST LT., O2001953, CP.
18 — HAMILL, ROBERT M., 1ST LT., O2064253, N.
38 — HUGHEY, CLARENCE E., T/SGT., 39576223, E.
38 — McGILL, ROBERT E., T/SGT., 42007458, R.
All 2:15. From APO 520 14:00 to AVIANO 16:15, mission F, one landing, total 2:15.

42-51975 | 1945-06-08

WAR DEPARTMENT — AAF Form No. 14 (Rev. 1 Oct. ’44)
ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF MAJOR ACCIDENT
Routing: received 6-26, evaluated 6-29, verified 6-30, coded 6-30.
A — Near Cerignola, Italy [corrected in pencil]; no collision; aircraft 42-51975; 6-8-45, 1530, day.
B — B-24J, series 42; San Giovanni, Italy; 15th AF, 304th Wing, 455th Bomb (H), 740th Bomb (H). Manufactured 7-27-44 [reading uncertain]; total 642:15; overhaul and depot None.
C — Kairisian [surname reading uncertain], Malkis R.; 1st Lt., AC, O-827665, M, age field 1922. Assigned San Giovanni, 15th AF, 455th Bomb (H), 740th. Rating Yes; Pilot; date 3-12-44 [reading uncertain]; normal duty Pilot.
D — First / other: totals [first obscured] / 251:55 [faint]; type 212:00 / 188:15; model 214:55 / 63:00; last 90 days 85:30 / 23:05; last 30 days 11:30 / 00:00; last 24 hours 1:25 / 00:00; combat 124:45 / 26:40. On instruments: No.
E — Personnel: Malkis R. Kairisian [surname reading uncertain], Robert D. Gilberts, William J. Anderson, Clifford K. Struble, John J. Speidel [readings uncertain; see operations form]. [First two 1st/2nd Lt AC, class 18; enlisted class 38. Minor and None entries, no parachutes used.]

42-51975 | 1945-06-08

F — DAMAGE: Totally Wrecked. All four engines and propellers Totally Wrecked.
G — POWER PLANT FAILURE: 00:45 since take-off. Engine No. 4: R-1830-65, CP-309349, New, total 00:45 Approx. Propeller model 23E50-505 [reading uncertain]; 642:15 since major overhaul.
Main oil sump plug apparently came out in flight causing total loss of oil in right outboard engine. Crew chief stated plug was safetied prior to take off, but no evidence of safety wire was found on investigation. No defects were noted on other engines.
100 Octane. DEAN O. GRIFFITH, Capt., AC., Gp. Eng. O., San Giovanni, Italy.
H — AIRFRAME, LANDING GEAR, OR OTHER MATERIEL [blank].
I — SPECIAL EQUIPMENT [blank].

42-51975 | 1945-06-08

J — AIRPORT AND FACILITIES AND AIRWAYS [blank].
K — WEATHER: C. A. V. U. [Signed] David W. Wolf.
L — GENERAL INFORMATION: Engineering Test Flight. Fire: Yes circled; both boxes marked. Violations: No. Disciplinary action: None. Local clearance; station of last departure San Giovanni. Forms 1, 1A and photos fields have marks adjacent to Yes.

42-51975 | 1945-06-08

M — DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

The aircraft was being test flown and number 4 engine was being slow timed after engine change. Pilot, co-pilot, and crew were experienced, having flown thirty-five combat missions. Take-off was at 1445A. As the plane circled the field number 4 engine was observed by the crew chief, who was on the ground, to be throwing an excessive amount of smoke. The flight continued at approximately 2,000 feet altitude with co-pilot lowering his seat and flying instruments. Weather at the time was CAVU. Approximately 45 minutes after take-off, the oil pressure on number 4 engine started falling off. The engine was feathered and immediately the airplane started losing altitude fast. More power was applied but altitude could not be maintained. Maximum power used was 55 inches of Hg. and 2700 RPM. The pilot crash landed with wheels up in a grain field approximately 15 miles southeast of Cerignola.

The airplane came to a stop after sliding approximately 360 feet. The number 1, 2, and 3 propellers were torn from the engines, number 4 was still feathered. The five members of the crew were all on the flight deck and escaped uninjured from the pilot's window as the top escape hatch was jammed.

It is assumed that the co-pilot upon feathering number 4 engine turned the switch off on number 1 as the pilot had used only 1° of nose left trim tab. This would also account for the drop in RPM on number 1 engine even though the propellor governor limit light indicated full high RPM since the airspeed, at the time full high RPM was applied, was 135 MPH. Also, had a thorough check been made on number 4 engine immediately after take-off, it is believed that the loss of oil would have been noticed. Inspection of the wreckage revealed that the oil tank to number 4 engine was empty after 45 minutes of flight. The oil sump plug was missing. There was no evidence of safety wire, however, the crew chief stated that the oil sump plug was definitely safetied. No malfunction could be discovered on number 1 engine.

Recommendations: All pilots should have this report brought to their attention. Also they should be impressed with the importance of careful checks of new engines on engineering test flights. Crew chiefs should be warned of the damage that can be caused by careless preflight and daily inspections especially in the matter of safetying oil sump plugs.
Action Taken: Above report will be read to all Pilots and Co-pilots of this Group.
Board: San Giovanni, Italy. [Signatures and typed names partly obscured.] ARLENE E. SANDERS [reading uncertain], Captain; FRANK V. THOMPSON, Major; L. B. MORRISON [reading uncertain], Captain. All Hq. 455th Bomb Gp.

42-51975 | 1945-06-08

AIRPLANE FLIGHT REPORT - OPERATIONS — A.A.F. FORM NO. 1
June 8, 45; APO 520 USA; aerial engineer W. Anderson, S/Sgt [faint]; 455th Bomb (H), 740th Bomb (H), B-24J 42-51975.
Class 18 — Kairisian, Malkis R., 1st Lt, O-827665 [reading uncertain], P.
Class 18 — Gilberts, Robert D., 2nd Lt [serial faint], CP.
Class 38 — Anderson, William J., S/Sgt, 12237726 [reading uncertain], E.
Class 38 — Struble, Clifford K., Cpl, 42008521 [reading uncertain], R.
Class 38 — Speidel, John J., Sgt, 39809392 [reading uncertain], G.
Test Hop, 13:40 to 15:05 [as entered], one landing, 1:25.

42-51975 | 1945-06-08

AIRPLANE FLIGHT REPORT - ENGINEERING — A.A.F. FORM NO. 1A
[Handwritten copy. Most inspection figures and oil entries faint.] Preflight and daily 6-8-45, APO 520. Communications: S, Smith; navigation D, Dodge [reading uncertain]. Aircraft hours to date 642:15. No. 4 engine hours to date 00:00.
Remarks [partly legible]: #4 engine change [remainder unclear]; 25 hr inspection satisfactory; 100 hr insp communications [illegible]; #3 supercharger changed [reading uncertain]; #4 engine changed (service sqdn) [faint].
Date 6/8/45; APO 520; M/Sgt Dodge. 15th, 304 Wing, 455 Bomb (H), 740 Bomb (H), AAF, B-24J 42-51975, engine R-1830-65.

42-51975 | 1945-06-08

740TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
Office of The Operations Officer
8 June 45
SUBJECT: Aircraft Accident.
TO: Whom it may concern.

1. We took off at 1445 to slow time number four (4) engine on ship 975, and immediately after take-off we cut back the power on number four (4) engine to 1800 R.P.M.s and 28″ manifold pressure. The other three engines were set at 2550 R.P.M and 41″ manifold pressure. We had difficulty in getting the air speed above 130 MPH and had to dive and loose 200 ft. in order to get the airspeed up to 150 MPH. We finally climbed to 2500 ft while circling the field and at approximately 1500 hours we went on a heading toward Cerignola. My co-pilot was flying at this time and I was trying to set up the C-1 which was very erratic. I finally gave up the C-1 and my co-pilot started to fly instruments. After a few minutes I noticed the oil pressure on No. four (4) engine beginning to drop, when it hit 40 on its way down I feathered the engine and boosted the power on the other three engines to 2300 R.P.M.s and 35″ manifold pressure, but the airspeed was 150 MPH and slowly dropping off. I put the nose down to get airspeed and we reached 150 M.P.H. again and lost approximately 800 ft making our altitude 1700 ft. As we leveled off the airspeed started to drop off and went to 135 MPH and we put down 8° flaps and boosted power to 2550 RPM and 41″ manifold pressure. It was at this time that No. one tachometer stuck at 2300 RPM, and dropped down to approximately 2050 R.P.M.s. The prop governor limit switch went out at full high and we were still loosing altitude. The engine did not seem to be pulling the indicated power. We checked all instruments on the engines and they were all normal except the tachometer on number one which still indicated approximately 2050 R.P.M.s and all the manifold pressures were at approximately 45″. At this time the altimeter was indicating 500 ft and we were starting to stall so we applied 20° flaps and I realized that we had to climb a little to get over the next hill in order to make a reasonably safe crash landing as there were long flat fields over the hill. I waited near the ship until every member of the crew were safe, then we ran about 150 ft away from the ship and watched it. Finally No. two (2) stopped running and started to burn for about a minute and went out. We noticed a truck coming toward us from a nearby farmhouse and we came back to the base leaving my co-pilot to guard the ship. We all got out safely with minor cuts and bruises. The crash occured at 1530. Everything happened so fast we didn’t have time to call the tower, lower the wheels or any other procedures.

2. The cause of failure of No. four (4) engine was found to be the rear sump plug which was missing.

[Signed] MALKIS R. KAIRISIAN [name reading uncertain], 1st Lt, AC, Pilot.

42-51975 | 1945-06-08

740TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
Office of The Operations Officer
8 June 45
SUBJECT: Air craft Accident.
TO: Whom it may concern.

1. We took off at 1445 to slow time No. four (4) engine on ship 975. After taking-off we circled the field trying to gain altitude for ten or fifteen minutes. After 2500 feet was reached we leveled off and tried to set up the C-1 which was not working properly. After many attempts, finally gave up and I flew it manually in the direction of Barletta. I then sat low in the seat and flew instruments, at the same time watching the engine instruments. Shortly after I had checked them, the pilot motioned to look at the oil pressure on No. four (4) it had dropped to 40 and was on the way down so we promptly feathered it.

2. After the engine was feathered we turned to a heading for the field, as we flew the airspeed began to drop, the power was increased to 2300 R.P.M.s and 35″ manifold pressure and we were still loosing air speed and altitude. The power was then increased to 2550 R.P.M.s and 41″ manifold pressure, then up to 45″. When this increase of power was applied No. one R.P.M. tachometer instead of increasing, fell from 2300 to 2000. I kept trying to get it up but the tachometer stayed at about 2000 and the indicator light came on indicating full high R.P.M. During the increasing of power and loosing of altitude 8° of flaps had been lowered and then 20°. Engine instruments were all indicating properly. Cylinder temperature, oil temperature, oil pressure, fuel pressure and the manifold pressure was pulling the same as Nos. two (2) and three (3) engines.

3. As the ground came up from sea level and we came down, a final attempt to maintain altitude was made. Full high R.P.M.s and manifold pressure was applied as we just cleared the crest of a hill. We had about 50 to 55 inches and full high R.P.M.s by indicator lights.

4. Flaps were also put in down position, but they reached only about 30° before the crash. When the ship came to a stop the dust was so thick that nothing could be seen. I crawled out of the seat and tried to operate the hatch, then crawled back to my seat still blinded by dust and turned all the switches in the opposite direction I found them in, and then crawled back to the hatch and found it was jammed. I saw the pilot crawl out of his window and followed him.

5. Upon inspection, the switches were found all in the on position, I must have turned them off on the initial touch of the ground, and in the excitement of the crash forgot I had turned them off and turned them all on again.

6. After we were all out of the ship No. two (2) engine flared up for about one minute and then went out, after this there was no burning.

7. I stayed with the ship while the rest of the crew members went to notify the squadron of the accident.

[Signed] ROBERT D. GILBERTS [surname reading uncertain], 2nd Lt, AC, CoPilot.

42-51975 | 1945-06-08

740TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H), AAF
Office of the Operations Officer
9 June 1945
SUBJECT: Aircraft Accident.
TO: Whom it may concern.

1. After forty-five minutes in the air, the pilot noticed the oil pressure on #4 engine dropping. He called my attention to the fact and I noticed it going down to 40 pounds and still dropping. The pilot feathered the engine and I motioned to him that I was going back to the waist to check and see if there was any oil leaking. On my way back I cut the generator and went on to the waist. The first thing I noticed was that we were dropping steadily and the oil was dripping from what I thought was the oil sump. We were getting pretty low, and I started my return to the flight deck. As I reached station 4.0 the plane struck the ground and I was thrown up between the radio desk and the seat.

[Signed] WILLIAM ANDERSON, S/Sgt Engineer.

44-48760 | 1945-06-13

WAR DEPARTMENT — AAF Form No. 14 (Rev. 1 Oct. ’44)
ARMY AIR FORCES — REPORT OF MAJOR ACCIDENT
[Routing: received 7-5, evaluated 7-13, verified 7-14, checked 7-7, coded 7-14.]
A — Cesenatico; no collision; 6/13/45, 11:55, day.
B — 44-48760, TB-24J [prefix reading uncertain], San Giovanni Air Field, Y785. 15th AF, 304th Wing, 455th Bomb Gp (H), 743rd. Total hours 659:25; last overhaul New.
C — Hamlin, John E., 1st Lt., AC, O822669, M, 21. Attached station Y785. Assigned San Giovanni Air Field, 15th AF, 304th, 455th Bomb Gp (H), 743rd. Aeronautical rating Yes; pilot, received 4/15/44; normal duty Pilot.
D — Flying hours [first / other]: total 443:10 / 559:00; type 443:10 / 291:10; model 91:00 / 169:17; last 90 days 60:55 / 86:05; last 30 days 17:25 / [blank]; last 24 hours 3:30 / 4:00; combat 175:25 / [blank]. Mountain Home Idaho. On instruments Yes. Instrument total 20:00 / 38:55; first pilot instrument last 6 months 12:00, last 30 days 7:15; night last 6 months 2:10, last 30 days 1:10.
E — Personnel [duty, name, serial, rank, class]
P — John E. Hamlin, O822669, 1st Lt AC, 18.
CP — Gorden R. Smith, O820525, 2nd Lt AC, 18.
N — William J. Riley, O2039300, 2nd Lt AC, 18.
N — John H. Smith, O785317, 1st Lt AC, 18.
E — Robert I. Hodges, 6902340, S/Sgt AC, 20.
X — Dean B. Smith, 17145416, Cpl AC, 38.
X — Clifford M. Hedberg, 39124795, Sgt AC, 38.
X — Riley L. Cranford, 34249208, Pfc AC, 38.
X — Aram Zakarian, 33448895, Pfc AC, 38.
X — Paul M. Schmidt, 39687165, S/Sgt AC, 38.
X — Terrell A. Collins, 19024036, Pfc AC, 38.
[No parachute use. First five: 15th AF, 455th Bomb Gp, 743rd Bomb Sq (H); passenger assignment includes 304th Wing Hq. Results mostly NO, with handwritten amendments near Cranford and Collins. See statements for injury details.]

44-48760 | 1945-06-13

F — DAMAGE: TOTALLY WRECKED. Aircraft rating 4; engines and propellers 4, 4, 4, 4 each [penciled].
G — POWER PLANT FAILURE [blank].
H — AIRFRAME, LANDING GEAR, OR OTHER MATERIEL:
Right main landing gear left dangling in flight after being violently shaken out of wing well with such force as to tear the Main Landing Gear Side Brace completely free from the Gear. Both Right and Left Elevators also severely damaged to the extent to make control of aircraft extremely difficult. Flight was tour of Europe and the cause for the damage: Aircraft caught in a violent storm.
[Signed] JOSEPH A. CAREWICZ [surname reading uncertain], 1st Lt., AC., SAN GIOVANNI.
I — SPECIAL EQUIPMENT [blank].

44-48760 | 1945-06-13

J — AIRPORT AND FACILITIES AND AIRWAYS [blank].
K — WEATHER: CESENATICO [remainder of line faint or struck through]. See Incl 1.
[Signed] DAVID W. WOLF, Captain, AC., San Giovanni.
L — GENERAL INFORMATION: Mission TOUR. Fire upon crashing: No. Forms 1, 1A attached: Yes. [UR field contains faint handwriting; photograph boxes unmarked.]

44-48760 | 1945-06-13

M — DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

This airplane was on an educational tour of the bomb damage in Northern Italy, Austria and Southern Germany. North of Verona the pilot ran into clouds at 3,000 feet and immediately made a 180° turn and flew back near Verona to gain altitude. At 12,000 feet he decided to continue the flight and flew through what he thought was a thin cloud. After 30 sec. he began to pick up ice and encountered rain. He started a turn to the right to come out when the ship began to hit violent up and down currents. It is assumed that the ship was out of control during the 20 to 30 minutes that he was in the clouds. After coming out of the cloud his right gear was hanging down with the locking strut torn away and no surfaces on the elevators. The crew was prepared for a crash landing at Cesenatico.

No one was hurt in the crash landing but three men were injured during the flight in turbulent clouds.
The pilot called Rimini for permission to crash land but being unable to maintain altitude was forced to land at Cesenatico.
The crew members stated the landing was smooth but the wing went down on the side of the damaged gear and the ship turned 180° and broke in two in the waist section and station 4.2 [reading uncertain].

[Handwritten] III T; 14-80.
Recommendations: It is recommended that all pilots and Co-pilots be warned of the danger of flying into clouds over mountainous areas.
Action Taken: None.
Board: San Giovanni. [Signed] JEROME H. HESS [reading uncertain], Major; JOSEPH A. CAREWICZ [surname reading uncertain], 1st Lt.; ARLENE E. SANDERS [reading uncertain], Capt.; FRANK V. THOMPSON, Major; L. B. MORRISON, JR. [reading uncertain], Capt. Hq. 455th BG (H).

44-48760 | 1945-06-13

AIRPLANE FLIGHT REPORT — OPERATIONS — A.A.F. FORM NO. 1 (REV. 1 JAN. 44)
6/13/45; APO #520; S/Sgt. Robert I. Hodges; 455th Bomb. Gp. (H), 743rd Bomb. Sq. (H); B-24J, 44-48760.
18 — Hamlin, John E., O-822669, 1st Lt.; P I :30, CP :30, P 4:00.
18 — Smith, Gorden R., O-820525, 2nd Lt.; CP 4:30, PI :30.
18 — Riley, William J., O-2039300, 2nd Lt.; N 5:00.
18 — Smith, John H., O-785317, 1st Lt.; N 5:00.
20 — Hodges, Robert I., 6902340, S/Sgt.; E 5:00.
38 — Smith, Dean B., 17145416, Cpl.; X 5:00.
38 — Hedberg, Clifford M., 39124795, Sgt.; X 5:00.
38 — Cranford, Riley L., 34249208, Pfc.; X 5:00.
38 — Zakarian, Aram, 33448895, Pfc.; X 5:00.
38 — Schmidt, Paul M., 39687165, S/Sgt.; X 5:00.
38 — Collins, Terrell A., 19024036, Pfc.; X 5:00.
From Carroll Tower 06:55 to Cesenatico Tower 11:55. Mission T, one landing, 5:00 total.

44-48760 | 1945-06-13

WEATHER REPORT [faint]
Incl 1.

The aircraft was damaged due to severe turbulence in clouds over the Alps in area between Verona and Bolzano.
No surface reports available from area in which plane was damaged.
Pilot reported following conditions over Southern Alps:
7/10 stratus and altostratus, bases 3,000′, lowering in areas of rain to less than 1000 feet. Tops of clouds 12,000′, except cloud which pilot entered, top of which was estimated at 14,000 - 15,000′ [altitudes faint]. Visibility unrestricted outside of cloud. No turbulence outside of cloud. Severe turbulence, rain and light rime icing in cloud.

[Signed] DAVID W. WOLF, Captain, Air Corps, Gp. Weather Officer.

44-48760 | 1945-06-13

743RD BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
Office of the Operations Officer
APO 520 US ARMY
STATEMENT

We were on the sightseeing tour of Bolzano, Munich, Linz, Villach, Venice, etc. and had flown up the Brenner Pass as far as Bolzano from Verona. The clouds could be seen ahead and we were getting lower than their altitude of 3000 feet when we entered the pass, so I did a 180 degree turn and flew back to Verona. Over the Po valley near Verona there were only scattered clouds up at approximately 10,000 feet so the pilot decided to climb above them and continue the journey on to Munich. We had reached and leveled off at 12,000 feet and turned to our heading to Munich of 13 degrees. We flew on this heading about two minutes when I saw that our course would take us through this cloud. By it's appearance the cloud was a peaceful alto stratus and should contain no weather hazards that could not be reckoned with. Then decided previous to entering the cloud that I would turn around if there was the slightest indication of icing or turbulence. We were in the cloud about one minute and, having noticed ice, hail and rain already, had completed 90 degrees of a 180 degree turn when all hell seemed to break loose and the B-24 was subjected to the most violent of up and down drafts. The first draft was downward and the altimeter stood at 6000 feet before the Co-pilot and I could right the ship and climb a little. The plane was tossed around like a child would handle a toy and it is our firm belief that at more occasions than one we were on our back, almost stalled out, (the airspeed reading 250 and 80 at different times) and in a partial spin. The gyro horizon was toppled with the first down draft and the elevator surfaces were torn completely off and also right gear torn down. We were in this cloud at least 30 minutes and during this time the pilot and co-pilot were co-ordinating their two capacities in attempting to keep the plane upright and flying. We were flying by needle and ball, altimeter, and the airspeed with 20 degree flaps, full turbo boost, and full right RPM. After a series of events when a couple of times the mountains below were in sight, we kept a general heading of south and came out of the cloud. We set up the C-1 auto pilot which partially kept the plane in a flying attitude, but it was practically impossible to maintain altitude with no elevator surfaces. Our approximate position when we came out of the cloud was south of the Alps and east of Verona, and we flew toward the coast line. We followed the coast line south laying our plans to land at Rimini for with two injured men in the waist, we wouldn't think of bailing out. We contacted Rimini tower and received landing instructions. However, being unfamiliar with the terrain and surrounding airfields, I prepared the crew for a crash landing at Cesenatico, which is 15 miles north of Rimini. With the left gear locked down and nose gear down and the right gear, which had been torn down in the storm, flapping in the breeze, a normal approach and landing was made with the co-pilot putting the crash bar down immediately. The right gear collapsed immediately and the plane began skidding and stopped with the nose in the opposite direction. The left gear and nose gear and number 2, 3, and 4 props were torn off and scattered to one side of and along the planes path. The plane skidded to a stop and everyone got out as soon as possible, the escape hatches having been opened prior to landing. The wounded men were carried out and the medics took over their treatment from there. None of the crew members were hurt during the landing. All except three escaped with no injuries.
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The injuries consisted of a broken left leg; a lacerated left knee and possibly fractured left shoulder; a large cut behind the right ear. All these injuries were among the men riding in the waist of the airplane and happened while the plane was in the turbulent cloud.

[Signed] JOHN E. HAMLIN, 1st Lt., Air Corps, Pilot.
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743RD BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF
APO 520 US ARMY
16 June 1945
STATEMENT OF ACCIDENT

On 13 June 1945 I was engineer on Aircraft #4448760 [as typed] participating in an aerial tour of Austria and Italy. Starting up the Brenner Pass we saw a storm approaching so turned around to return. As we were returning toward Verona climbing as we approached we leveled off at 11,800 feet over Verona and then headed for Munich over the Alps. Shortly after leaving Verona, going through hazy clouds for a short time, we nosed over in a thunderhead. The Pilot and Copilot brought the ship out of flips, dives for twenty-five minutes during which time it was also completely inverted. After these Officers flew the aircraft out of the storm, I went back to check the damage to the plane, and found the nose turret had the plexiglass, the turret itself nearly ripped from its mounting, the flares and beacon light were loose. The plexiglass of the upper turret was blown out, the right waist window was broken, the right landing gear was pulled out of its position and the drag strut was broken. The elevators were gone, the right vertical stabilizer was bent about 10 degrees.

The E.M. in waist received a broken ankle and another had an injured shoulder, extent not known. First aid was given these men. Sight gauges were turned off. Preparing for a crash landing five enlisted men were on the half deck, one in front of the ditching belt. I was on the flight deck. As soon as full flaps were given I got in between armored curtains and the pilot seat to call off air speed, remaining there until landing. The escape hatch was open on final approach. On stopping I helped the pilot and copilot to get out.

[Signed] Robert I. Hodges, S.Sgt., 6902340.

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743RD BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF
APO 520 US ARMY
16 June 1945
STATEMENT OF ACCIDENT

During an aerial tour on 13 June 1945, we were flying north at eleven thousand (11,000) feet, just south of Verona, Italy, when we ran into a cloud. At first it appeared to be plain alto-stratus but soon proved to be anything but that type of cloud. For approximately thirty (30) minutes we were in this cloud during which time the airplane was subjected to violent up and down drafts. At one time we were in a partial spin and at another we (the aircraft) was on its back. The resultant damage to the aircraft was; elevators were torn off, right landing gear torn down and the drag strut was completely severed, the nose turret was collapsed. Two men were injured in the storm, one had a broken leg and the other a possible fractured collar bone and lacerated knee. We decided to land at Montdolpho but on nearing Rimini the airplane became very difficult to handle so the pilot decided to land at the nearest field. We crash landed at Cesenatico, Italy where nobody was further injured on landing, but the airplane was completely demolished.

[Signed] WILLIAM J. RILEY, 2nd Lt., Air Corps, Navigator.

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743RD BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF
455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF
APO 520 US ARMY
16 June 1945
STATEMENT OF ACCIDENT

While participating in an aerial tour on 13 June 1945, from my position in the bombardier's compartment the first indication of bad weather was followed by a turn which would take us straight south. In the turn all hell broke loose and we experienced dives and updrafts which broke the glass in the nose turret, ripped the elevators from the horizontal stabilizer, and tore the right landing gear out of the wing, breaking the strut and permitting it to hang in an unnatural position pointing toward the rear and in toward the plane. We continued south are spending some twenty to thirty minutes in the storm and located the Cesenatico airstrip where we made a successful crash landing. Injuries were suffered by passengers riding in the waist during the storm but no injuries resulted from the crash landing. All movable equipment was thrown from the airplane and all members were baced and prepared for the impact. All eleven members were cleared of the ship when it came to rest without further injury. The aircraft was totally wrecked.

[Signed] JOHN H. SMITH, 1st Lt., Air Corps. O785317.

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WITNESS STATEMENT
13 June 1945

On 13 June 1945, at approximately 11:26, a B-24 flew over Cesenatico Airdrome apparently in trouble since the right wheel appeared to be hanging down. The pilot called Rimini for permission to crash land at that field and was given clearance to use crash strip at Rimini. At 11:29 this same plane was observed to be making a straight in approach from the south on the Cesenatico runway. Effort was made to contact the ship and inform the pilot that he was on the wrong field, but the acft continued coming in. Both left and right wheel and nose wheel appeared to be down but none of the three looked as though it was securely locked.

As soon as the acft hit the runway the right wheel buckled causing the acft to ground loop on its right wing and skid off the north side of the runway where it crashed against a sand bank and split open. A small fire which broke out in one of the engines was almost immediately extinguished by the field crash crew.

Acft number was 443760 [as typed] and it belonged to 455th Bomb Group. Three occupants injured, eight others suffered no injuries.

[Signed] HARRY CONSTANDIO [surname reading uncertain], 1st Lt., Air Corps, Flying Cont. Officer.
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STATEMENT

On 16 June 1945 [as typed], I was the Tower Officer in the morning at the time a strange B-24 crashed landed on the Cesenatico Airfield. For fifteen minutes before the accident we had been hearing a conversation between a B-24 Pilot and Rimini Tower about a crash landing required by the B-24. From the conversation the B-24 had trouble with its wheels and was unable to get its nose wheel and right landing gear down in the locked position. As yet Rimini had not located the Bomber in the air. With casual indifference to this chatter our Tower went on conducting the business on our field until a Dickie aircraft in the vicinity reported a B-24 making a straight in approach to our field and about five miles out. We sighted the aircraft coming in at about a 20° gliding angle. It was at this time that Rimini Tower called the B-24 and instructed them to land on the strip to the left of the runway. We hastily got contact with the B-24 and cleared them for a straight in approach to our field on the main runway. Notice was immediately served to the crash trucks to get ready and I shot a red flare to warn the surrounding field area. The B-24 came in at a 20° angle to the runway with the right wheel partly down, the left wheel fully extended and the nose wheel up. The B-24 didn't level off but went straight into the runway at 20°. The right wing hit the ground and the plane pivoted on the wing and turned 180° before coming to a stop some 100′ off the runway. One engine was thrown to the middle of the runway and the plane was broken in two places. The fire truck extinguished a slight flame in one of the inboard engines. All crew members were reported safe.

[Signed] JAMES A. MILNER, 1st Lieutenant, Air Corps, 85th Ftr Sq, 79th Ftr Gp.

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[Two uncaptioned photographs. Upper: close view of a tail fin and damaged adjoining surfaces. Lower: wrecked aircraft showing cockpit, wing and tail.]

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[Three uncaptioned photographs. Upper: wrecked aircraft from the side. Middle: damaged aft section with “67” and national insignia visible. Lower: close view of a vertical stabilizer and damaged adjoining surfaces.]

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HEADQUARTERS
455TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Air Inspector
APO-520 US Army
25 June 1945

SUBJECT: Transmittal of AAF Form 14
TO: Chief, Office of Flying Safety, AAF, Winston-Salem, N.C.

1. In accordance with XVAF Memo. #120-5, dated 9 July 1944, transmitted herewith is the AAF Form 14 on an aircraft of this group that crash landed.

[Signed] CHARLES E. ADAMS, 2nd Lt., A.C., Air Inspector
1 Incl
Incl 1: AAF Form 14

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NAME OF PILOT: Hamlin, John E.
TYPE OF PLANE: TB-24J [first letter uncertain]
ACCIDENT NUMBER: 45-6-13-512
CHARGED TO: Col. [surname unclear], Safety Ed.
OUT: 7/16 [reading uncertain]. IN: 7/19.
[Remaining routing rows blank.]