

WAR DEPARTMENT

ACCIDENT NO.

U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

(1) Place AAF Sta 106, APO 557, England (2) Date 1 August, 1944 (3) Time 11:55

AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model B-17G (5) A. S. No. 42-97072 (6) Station 106

Organisation: (7) 8th (8) 38th (9) 5th

(Command and Air Force)

(Group)

(Squadron)

PERSONNEL BH

DUTY	NAME (Last name first)	RATING	SERIAL NO.	RANK	PERSONNEL CLASS	BRANCH	AIR FORCE OR COMMAND	RESULT TO PERSONNEL	USE OF PARACHUTE
(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)
PI	Robert Harris	P	0-760625	2nd Lt.	10	AC	8th	Fatal	None
CP	Robert J. Sica	P	0-829092	2nd Lt.	10	AC	8th	Fatal	None
N	Elmer M. Pettine	N	0-718412	2nd Lt.	10	AC	8th	Fatal	None
B	Richard K. Spead	B	0-771988	2nd Lt.	10	AC	8th	Fatal	None
RG	Harold Restor		12000475	S/Sgt.	10	AC	8th	Fatal	None
TT	William C. Richter		32690931	S/Sgt.	10	AC	8th	Fatal	None
BT	Nicholas A. Busich		36869086	Sgt.	10	AC	8th	Fatal	None
TG	Robert H. White		37481651	Sgt.	10	AC	8th	Fatal	None
FG	Vernon A. Stanford		38513380	Sgt.	10	AC	8th	Fatal	None

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED OR CHANGED

TO RESTRICTED

BY AUTHORITY OF CGRAF

(20) Harris Robert (NMT) (21) 0-760625 (22) 2nd Lt. (23) 10 (24) AC

Assigned (25) 8th (26) 38th (27) 5th (28) 106

Attached for flying (29) 8th (30) 38th (31) 5th (32) 106

Original rating (33) Pilot (34) 12/5/43 Present rating (35) Pilot (36) 12/5/43 Instrument rating (37) 25/5/44

FIRST PILOT HOURS: (38) This type B-17 series 126:10 (39) Instrument time last 6 months 23:40

(40) This model B-17G 65:35 (41) Instrument time last 30 days None

(42) Last 90 days 65:35 (43) Night time last 6 months 34:00

(44) Total on form 5 571:20 (45) Night time last 30 days None

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE NP

DAMAGE	(46) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(46) Aircraft <u>WS</u>	Complete destruction
(47) Engine(s) <u>WS WS WS WS</u>	
(48) Propeller(s) <u>WS WS WS WS</u>	

(49) Weather at the time of accident 10/10ths strato-cumulus 100 feet. Visibility 2000 yards.

Wind East eight (8) miles per hour.

(51) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident Yes

(52) Cleared from AAF 106 (53) To Combat (54) Kind of clearance Operational

(55) Pilot's mission Combat

(56) Nature of accident Collision in full flight with object other than A/C.

(57) Cause of accident Unknown. It is believed mechanical trouble with a fire and explosion in the air caused crash.

(58) Has Form 50 been submitted? No.

# DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

2nd Lt. Robert (NMI) Harris, Pilot, made a normal take-off climbing into a cloud layer at 400 feet. His plane was next seen under the overcast at 300-400 feet. Conflicting opinions are given as to what happened next.

Civilian Peter fellow gave this testimony:

The plane came from the N.West to the East in a left turn. At that time the plane was two (2) miles away from Mr. Fellow and about two (2) miles from Station 128. The plane seemed to be on fire on the underside. The plane rolled over in a steep left turn and dived straight into the ground. Exploded immediately - evidently the gasoline. Almost immediately there was a second explosion much sharper in sound. A third explosion took place 10-15 minutes later.

Corporal K.L. Moddrell, 1199 MP. Co., Station 128 gave the following statement:

I had just came out the mess hall and was facing in the direction of the crash. I saw an explosion in the air, a large ball of fire, and then it fell to the ground. I immediately left for the scene of the accident. About one and an half (1½) miles from the accident, he heard another explosion (11:56). Several minutes later, 12:05, after he had arrived at the accident, another explosion, evidently one (1) or more bombs (2 x 2000 GP's) took place. This third explosion destroyed nearly all of the plane. It was not until about two and an half to three (2½-3) hours later that an identification letter on part of a wing was found.

Conclusions: Plane was in trouble and pilot was attempting to get to Station 128 for a landing. Plane evidently was on fire as all reports mention from streak of flame to large explosion in the air. It is believed that some sort of explosion took place in the air throwing the plane into an uncontrollable bank and dive. The low altitude at which the plane was flying made recovery impossible and crash resulted. From reports, the second explosion may have been either gas or a bomb. The third explosion was definitely a bomb or bombs for the sound of the explosion was much greater to observers who had remained at the same distance (1½-2 miles) away.

Cause for original fire in the air and apparently an explosion is unknown.

Responsibility: Unknown, but it is believed that some mechanical failure occurred causing a fire in a wing or an engine.

Signature

GEORGE H. KORMAN, JR., Major, AC

ARTHUR E. DEAN, JR., Major, AC

PHILIP M. ALGAR, Captain, AC