

RESTRICTED
WAR DEPARTMENT
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

ACCIDENT NO. 45-1-1-524

REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

2-13-45

2357-0

(1) Place AAF STATION NO. 106 (2) Date 1 January 1945 (3) Time 0815
AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model B-17G (5) A. F. No. 43-38801 (6) Station AAF No. 106
Organization: (7) 8th (8) 38th Bomb (H) (9) 54th Bomb (H) (10) 2357
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)

PERSONNEL

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)
P	Fisher, Robert J.	P	0-706155	1st Lt	18	AC	8th	None	None
1st	Doherty, William E.	P	0-577380	2nd Lt	18	AC	8th	None	None
N	Ferrell, Jack O.	N	0-62831	2nd Lt	01	AC	8th	None	None
B	Bass, Ross	B	0-1309031	1st Lt	18	AC	8th	None	None
R	Pechout, Richard A.		11102154	T/Sgt	38	AC	8th	None	None
TT	Seelley, Clarence B.		39270874	T/Sgt	38	AC	8th	None	None
BT	Mathias, Charles W.		18000850	Sgt	38	AC	8th	None	None
TG	Denney, Roy E.		38563685	Sgt	38	AC	8th	None	None
FG	Maffei, Albert (NMI)		39332710	Sgt	38	AC	8th	None	None

PILOT'S RECORD WITH ACCIDENT

(20) Fisher, Robert J. (21) 0-706155 (22) 1st Lt (23) 18 (24) AC
(Last name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Serial number) (Rank) (Personnel class) (Branch)
Assigned (25) 8th (26) 38th Bomb (27) 54th Bomb (H) (28) AAF No. 106
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)

Attached for flying (29) 8th (30) 38th Bomb (31) 54th Bomb (H) (32) AAF No. 106
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)

Original rating (33) Pilot (34) 1 July 44 Present rating (35) Pilot (36) 1 July 44 Instrument rating (37) 24 Oct 44
(Rating) (Date) (Rating) (Date) (Date) (Date)

FIRST PILOT HOURS:
(at the time of this accident)

(38) This type B-17 79:45 (42) Instrument time last 6 months 0:00
(39) This model B-17G 79:45 (43) Instrument time last 30 days 0:00
(40) Last 90 days 79:45 (44) Night time last 6 months 0:30
(41) Total 309:20 (45) Night time last 30 days 0:30

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

DAMAGE	(46) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(46) Aircraft	Left outer wing panel and tip, No. 1 engine and mount,
(47) Engine(s)	chin turret, plexiglass nose, left and right inner
(48) Propeller(s)	wing panels. Disposition of A/C questionable pending
	decision by 2nd S.A.D.

(49) Weather at the time of accident: No clouds; visibility 2500 yards; wind NNW at 6 miles per hour.

(51) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident? No

(52) Cleared from AAF STATION NO. 106 (53) To Combat (54) Kind of clearance Operational

(55) Pilot's mission Operational

(56) Nature of accident Collision while airborne with object other than aircraft.

(57) Cause of accident Aircraft brushed tree tops when pilot maneuvered to prevent collision with what he believed was another aircraft.

02-14

REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

Lt. Fisher's aircraft was the ninth one in the second squadron to take off, which was accomplished in the darkness at pre-dawn. Lt. Fisher held his aircraft on the ground until he was going approximately 130/135 MPH. The aircraft was loaded with 2700 gallons of gasoline and 5,000 pounds of bombs. In order to attain the speed, he had to hold the aircraft on the ground and utilize the full length of the runway. About fifteen (15) seconds after take-off, and after calling for wheels up, Lt. Fisher saw what he believed to be an aircraft flying a collision course with him from about 2:30 o'clock. He reported that this aircraft was only a few feet above him and he believed that there was an imminent possibility of a collision. Lt. Fisher levelled his aircraft and attempted to make a skidding turn to the left. As his aircraft was making this maneuver, his left wing and nose collided with a small group of trees, tearing the wing tip loose and smashing the left wing and plexiglass nose. He then kicked full right rudder and endeavored to climb the aircraft. He climbed out on course, reported his accident to the Control Tower, and received instructions to proceed to the bomb disposal area. He later turned to the field and landed.

Lt. Fisher reported that he saw navigation lights; however, other members of the crew only reported seeing a white light which could have either been the tail light on an aircraft flying directly away from him, or one of the marker lights mounted on a twenty (20) foot pole which is less than one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) mile off the end of the runway. Inasmuch as the ground level at this point is at least fifty (50) feet higher than the level of the runway, it would have been quite possible to confuse this marker light with that of an aircraft tail light. It is the opinion of this board that this was the light that Lt. Fisher saw. This statement is further substantiated by the fact that the engineer reported, during the inquest, that he was watching the instruments at all times and that fifty (50) feet was the highest reading registered by the altimeter at any time prior to the contact with the trees. (It is the standard procedure to set altimeters at "Zero" before take-off from the field.)

RESPONSIBILITY: It is the opinion of this board that the accident was 100% pilot error and was the result of poor technique employed by the pilot in taking his aircraft off.

RECOMMENDATIONS: This accident will be called to the attention of all flying personnel at this Station, and means for avoiding a recurrence of the same type of accident will be stressed.

Record of this accident will be placed in the pilot's AAF Form 5 and 201 files.

N. HANSEN,
Major, AC,
Group S-4.

J. K. HALEY,
Major, AC,
Flying Control O.

J. P. SCARBROUGH,
1st Lieut, AC,
Weather Officer.

H. H. STROUD,
Major, AC,
Flight Surgeon.

The above listed ex-officios attended the board meeting.

Signature

ROBERT E. THACKER, Lieut Col, A C.

GEORGE N. KOEHLER, JR., Lieut. Col, A C.

ARTHUR E. BEAN, Major, A C.

Date 13 January 1945.

USAPP/6-43/15W/10409

RESTRICTED

8 January, 1945.

STATEMENT BY 1ST LT ROBERT J. FISHER, O-706155, CONCERNING
AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT OF B-17G, #43-38801, 1 JANUARY, 1945.

Took off on green light from caravan. Left ground at approximately 135 miles per hour. Shortly after take-off I noticed an airplane coming at us from about our 2 o'clock position and down on us. I estimated the lights to be approximately 50 to 75 feet apart and realized that if I did not alter our course there would in all probability be a collision. I knew we were too low to bank so I tried to skid the ship from a collision course while holding her level. Suddenly I felt a collision and realized that we had hit an object. The impact was estimated to be 30 seconds after our wheels left the runway. Our rate of climb after leaving the runway was 200 to 300 feet per minute and our altimeter indicated approximately 100 feet at the time of the impact. Our air speed remained 135 to 140 miles per hour. The ship lurched to the left and down and I kicked full right rudder and hauled back. The ship settled a little more then began to rise slowly. After I had full control I climbed to 500 feet indicated, reduced the power setting slightly, and tried to determine the damage to the best of my ability. I then called the tower and told them I was damaged and was heading for the coast to jettison my D.A. bombs. After receiving the exact location to jettison my bombs, I proceeded to the coast, dropped the bombs, and returned to the base.

Robert J. Fisher

ROBERT J. FISHER,
1st Lt, Air Corps,
O-706155, Pilot.

RESTRICTED

[Signature]

RESTRICTED

STATEMENT BY 2nd LT WILLIAM E. DOHENY, O-577380, CONCERNING AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
OF B-17G, # 43-38801, 1 JANUARY 1945.

"We left the ground at 135 MPH. I glanced at the engine instruments, particularly noting manifold pressure, oil temperature, oil pressure and cylinder head temperature. Everything being normal, I watched the flight instruments for a few seconds and then noticed an airplane in front and to the right of us, particularly the tail light. The pilot, immediately started maneuvering to the left, dropping the left wing a slight bit and using a great deal of left rudder to the airplane over as soon as possible. I glanced out the pilot's left window and noticed we were extremely low and then saw trees looming in front of the left wing. We hit the trees slightly and feeling the airplane jolt, the pilot immediately leveled off and pulled up slightly. The ship seemed to sink a slight bit, and then very slowly started climbing. I think because of our smooth take-off, gradual climb and a good rate of speed, enabled us to keep from sinking into the trees after impact."

William E. Doheny
WILLIAM E. DOHENY,
2nd Lt, Air Corps,
Co-Pilot.

~~RESTRICTED~~

RESTRICTED

STATEMENT BY 2nd LT JACK G. FERRELL, O-462831, CONCERNING AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
OF B-17G, # 43-38801, 1 JANUARY 1945.

"We took off on runway 240 and after clearing the runway, I was checking the G-Box. Immediately after hearing a sharp sound, I felt the bombardier go back. After the ship was under ~~FERRELL~~ control, the pilot asked for a heading to the coast to jettison the bombs." I did not see any other A/C.

Jack G. Ferrell
JACK G. FERRELL,
2nd Lt, Air Corps,
Navigator.

~~RESTRICTED~~ RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

STATEMENT BY 1st LT ROSS BASS, O-1309031, CONCERNING AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT OF
B-17G, # 43-38801, 1 JANUARY 1945.

"Immediately after take-off, I was sitting in Bombardier's seat in nose
of ship. I saw that our altitude was below the tops of the trees sillouetted
to the front. Just as the contact was made, I jumped to the back of the nose."

Ross Bass
ROSS BASS,
1st Lt, Air Corps,
Bombardier.

~~*Ross*~~
RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

STATEMENT BY T/SGT. CLARENCE B. SEELEY, 39270874, ENGINEER, CONCERNING AIRCRAFT
ACCIDENT ON 1 JANUARY 1945.

At take-off for an operational mission I was watching the instruments and calling off air speeds. When I called off 130 the pilot made a normal take-off. On the climb I was watching the altimeter and after it reached a reading of fifty (50) feet it started to drop and I immediately looked out the window and saw what I thought to be the ground. I immediately yelled to the pilot to pull up, after which the plane came in contact with some object which later proved to be trees. The pilot made a very good recovery and after gaining altitude we contacted Flying Control on the R/T and notified them of the incident after which they instructed us to jettison our bombs in the channel and return to base. Upon returning to base a normal landing was made.

CLARENCE B. SEELEY, 39270874,
T/Sgt., Engineer.

Clarence B. Seeley

~~SECRET~~
RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS
AAF STATION NO. 106
Office of the Flying Control Officer

R-4-1

2 January, 1945.

SUBJECT: Aircraft Accident.

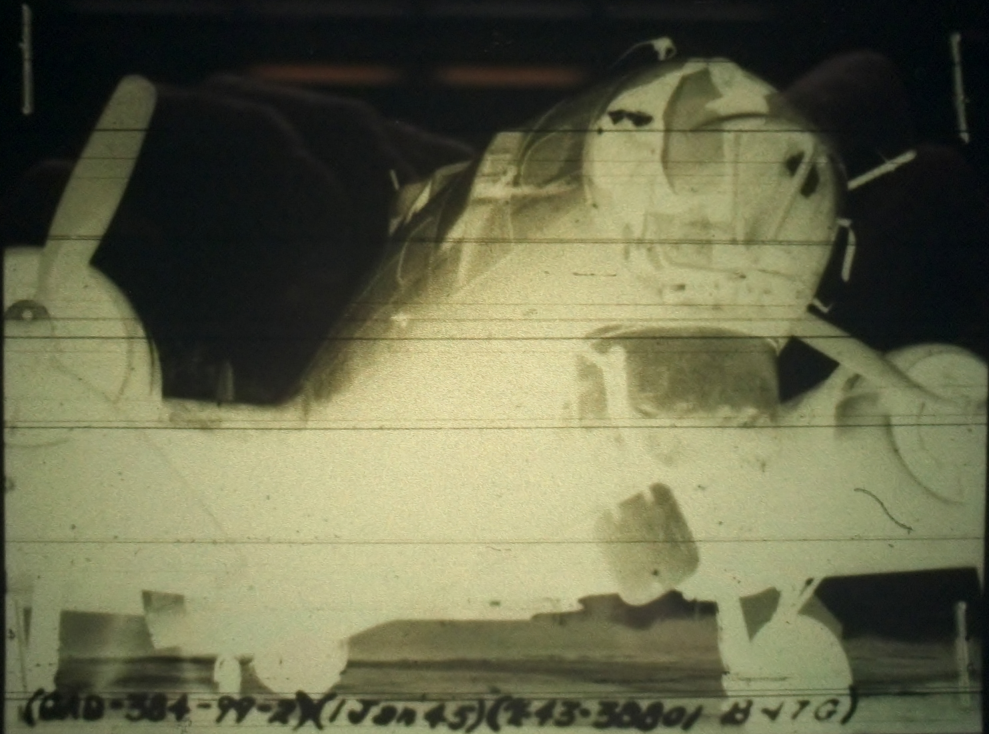
TO : COMMANDING OFFICER, AAF Station No. 106, APO 357, U.S. Army.

1. At 0754¹/₂ hrs Jan. 1, 1945, aircraft # 8801, pilot Lt. Fisher made a normal take-off for an operational mission. Approximately ten minutes after take-off aircraft # 8801 called in on R/T saying he had dived to keep from running into another aircraft, and had hit a tree with his left wing, and wanted instructions. He was advised to drop his bombs (DAs) 20 miles SW of Southwold. After dropping bombs he returned to base and made a normal landing at 1015 hrs.

Joseph C. Mailey, Jr.
JOSEPH C. MAILEY, JR.,
Major, Air Corps,
S. F. O. O.

~~RESTRICTED~~ RESTRICTED

[illegible]



(QAD-384-99-2)(1 Jan 45)(243-30001 BVTG)

