

RESTRICTED

WAR DEPARTMENT

ACCIDENT No.

U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

45-1-20-237  
0

(1) Place AAF Station 107 (2) Date 20 January, 1945 (3) Time 1535  
AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model B-17G (5) A. P. No. 43-38512 (6) Station AAF 106  
Organisation: (7) 8th (8) 384th Bomb (H) (9) 54th Bomb (H) (10) 6  
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)

PERSONNEL

DUTY	NAME (Last name first)	RANK	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	Fleishman, Warren G.	P	0-1302623	1st Lt.	18	AC	8th	Major	Nil
CP	Laney, John H.	P	0-715243	2nd Lt.	18	AC	8th	Major	Nil
W	Silverman, Murray C.	W	0-2071486	2nd Lt.	18	AC	8th	Fatal	Nil
TOG	Decker, Floyd V.		39338132	S/Sgt	38	AC	8th	Fatal	Nil
NO	Richardson, William H.		31013676	T/Sgt	38	AC	8th	Major	Nil
TT	Woodruff, Walter C.		14097876	T/Sgt	38	AC	8th	Major	Nil
BT	Mitchell, Dorel H.		39919891	S/Sgt	38	AC	8th	Major	Nil
TO	Galetto, Anthony J.		32728625	S/Sgt	38	AC	8th	Major	Nil
PO	Baumgardner, Frank		31013676	S/Sgt	38	AC	8th	Major	Nil

BY REC DATE 50 JAN 1945  
(20) Fleishman Warren G (21) 0-1302623 (22) 1st Lt. (23) 18 (24) AC  
(Last name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Serial number) (Rank) (Personnel class) (Branch)  
Assigned (25) 8th (26) 384th Bomb (H) (27) 54th Bomb (H) (28) AAF 106  
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)  
Attached for flying (29) Pilot (30) 2-8-44 (31) Pilot (32) 2-8-44 (33) Instrument rating (34) 7-10-44  
(Rating) (Date) (Rating) (Date) (Instrument rating) (Date)

FIRST PILOT HOURS:

(at the time of this accident)

(35) This type 361:50 (36) Instrument time last 6 months 5:00  
(37) This model 331:20 (38) Instrument time last 30 days 1:00  
(39) Last 90 days 93:15 (40) Night time last 6 months 23:45  
(41) Total 758:45 (42) Night time last 30 days 0:30

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

DAMAGE	(43) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(44) Aircraft <u>Complete destruction</u>	
(47) Engine(s) <u>4</u>	
(48) Propeller(s) <u>4</u>	

(49) Weather at the time of accident Visibility 200 to 400 yards in very heavy snow shower. Ceiling estimated 200 feet at 10/10ths. Wind west at 15 miles per hour.

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

(51) Cleared from AAF 106 (52) To combat (53) Kind of clearance operational

(54) Pilot's mission Operational

(55) Nature of accident Believed A/C had a considerable amount of ice and that the #3 and 4 engines malfunctioned causing the A/C to rush into the ground.

(56) Cause of accident It is believed that heavy ice spoiled the aerodynamic efficiency of the A/C and this coupled with losing two engines resulted in an unavoidable crash.

(57) Has Form 54 been submitted? Yes

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### DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

This accident occurred on return from an operational mission from Germany at Army Air Force Station 107. The pilot reported having trouble with the No. 4 engine on the entire return journey. This aircraft was flying as part of a formation returning to Station 106 and, upon getting in the vicinity of the home base, encountered severe weather conditions. The pilot made an estimate of the situation and determined that his best procedure would be to return to the east coast of England, where he knew that weather conditions were such that he would be able to land safely. Lt. Fleishman was flying at 2,000 feet and on a southeasterly heading with heavy icing conditions and it is believed that his No. 4 engine went out. About this time it was noted that the props were throwing a considerable amount of ice and it is believed that the entire aircraft had accumulated a considerable amount of ice. The aircraft began losing altitude quite rapidly and the co-pilot told all crew members to take a crash position. Lt. Fleishman realized that a crash was going to be unavoidable and attempted to reduce his airspeed to a minimum by pulling the nose of the aircraft up. The aircraft was still mashing in a nose high altitude at 120 miles per hour when it crashed through the tops of some trees and nosed into the ground.

When questioned about his procedure, Lt. Fleshman stated that he applied turbos to all engines and, in addition, used the inter-cooler system to prevent the forming of carburetor ice. He also stated that he had sufficient gasoline to enable him to return to the east coast safely. He stated that he believed he had about five hundred gallons of gasoline.

It is the opinion of this Board that responsibility for the accident may be attributed 50% to engine failure and 50% to weather. There are no substantial grounds on which to base a material failure due to the complete destruction of the engines. It is impossible to arrive at any definite conclusion as to what may have happened.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

A circular clock face with a black border and white background. The clock has black numbers from 1 to 12. A black hand points to the 12 o'clock position. Overlaid on the clock is a black rectangular stamp. The stamp contains the word "RECEIVED" in a bold, sans-serif font. Below it, in a smaller font, are the words "MAR - 3 1945". To the right of the date, there is a small, stylized logo or mark. The clock face is slightly tilted.

ROBERT E. TRACKER, 1st Col., Air Corps.

GEORGE H. KOENIG, JR., Lt. Col., Air Corps.

ARTHUR E. BEAN, JR., Major, Air Corps.

Hq SOS USAPP/6-43/15M/10404

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STATEMENT BY 1ST WARREN G. FLESHMAN, O-13026239 CONCERNING AIRCRAFT  
ACCIDENT OF B-17G, #43-38542 ON 20 JANUARY, 1945.

We were doing approximately 125/130 air speed when we hit the ground. The new armor plate glass was frozen. I could not see the ground before I hit.

The #4 engine was giving trouble all the way back to England. I think I lost another engine but I am not sure.

I must have had ice causing an increase in stalling speed.

The engine appeared to be running slower and slower.

I pulled the nose up just before we crashed in an effort to reduce our speed to a minimum.

WARREN G. FLESHMAN,  
1st Lt., Air Corps,  
Pilot.

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

*Quentin Wilson*  
QUENTIN WILSON,  
Captain, Air Corps,

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STATEMENT BY T/SGT. WILLIAM H. RICHARDSON, 34013676, CONCERNING AIRCRAFT  
ACCIDENT OF B-17G, #43-38542 ON 20 JANUARY, 1945.

The co-pilot seemed to know that we were going to crash land and he said that we should all get in our crash position.

We went thru the tops of some trees then it seemed as if we hit the ground almost nose first.

Just before we hit, I heard a banging sound from one of the engines.

About fifteen (15) minutes before crashing, the # 3 and 4 engines seemed as if they were slowing down.

At about 1515 hours, I called up the togglier and asked him what altitude we were at and he said 2,000 feet. At about 1520 hours, I was talking to the co-pilot over interphone and I told him what the weather was and after I said that, he told us to get into our crash position. I called back and asked him what he meant and he again said that we should all get into our crash position immediately. By that time we were getting ready to hit the ground. There was some banging from the engines before we hit.

Do you know anything about the engine operation? No sir, except that the engines were making funny sounds all the time. It seemed as if they would run good for three (3) or four (4) seconds and then it seemed as if they were going out.

The engines did not sound normal before we hit. It seemed as if the #1 and #2 engines were O.K., and the #3 and #4 engines were bad.

I thought it was the pilot who called for crash positions but later found that it was actually the co-pilot. The way I understood it, the pilot did not know we were going to crash.

WILLIAM H. RICHARDSON,  
T/Sgt., Air Corps,  
Radio Operator.

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

*Quentin Wilson*  
QUENTIN WILSON,  
Captain, Air Corps,

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## STATEMENT

11 February 1945

- A. Pilot: LT. FLESHMAN
- B. Aircraft: 338542.
- C. Date of accident: 20 January 1945.
- D. Surface wind: W.S.W. 13 M.P.H., R/W #27.
- E. Airfield inspected at 1345 Hrs.
- F. Statement.

1. At approximately 1540 hours 20 January 1945, Sgt. Kray of the HF transmitter reported a B-17 crashed near him. Ambulance and crash tender were immediately dispatched to the scene of accident.

2. At 1638 hours, crashed aircraft was identified as being from Grafton Underwood. The injured crew members were taken to the 303rd Hospital.

3. At the time of the accident, the visibility was 400 yards, and the cloud base was obscured. Before the crash, the aircraft was never in radio contact with Molesworth Tower.

*Bodie G. Fite*  
BODIE G. FITE,  
1st Lt. A.C.,  
Flying Control Officer.

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ARMY AIR FORCES

UNSATISFACTORY REPORT

(See AAF Reg. 15-54 for information on Proper Use of this Form)

LEAVE BLANK

TO BE FILLED IN BY STATION	
STATION SERIAL No. 45-118	DATE SUBMITTED 13-2-45

A. S. C. SERIAL No.	REFER TO	CLASS

STATION AAF STATION 106, APO 557		ORGANIZATION HEADQUARTERS 384TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)	
SUBJECT OF REPORT CLASS OIG - B17G AIRPLANE	Manufacturer BOEING	AAF Order or Shipping No.	
AIRCRAFT—Model & AAF Serial No. B17G 43-38542	ENGINE—Model & AAF Serial No.	UNIT OR ACCESSORY—Type, Model and Serial No.	
AIRCRAFT REPORTS ONLY LAST D. L. R.—Dapt NONE	Date	Flying Time Since	Total Flying Time 263:00
ENGINE REPORTS ONLY LAST OVERHAUL—Dapt	Hours Since	Reports and Hours At Each Previous Overhaul	
Name		Part Drawing, Serial and Specification No.	
Time in Use	Quantity on Hand	Quantity Known Defective	No. Previous Failures
Quantity Known Defective		Manufacturer	Inspector's No. or Identification
Indicate by "X" Disposition of Exhibit: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photographed and Prints Enclosed <input type="checkbox"/> Held for Instructions <input type="checkbox"/> Sent Under Separate Cover <input type="checkbox"/> Sent in Attached Package <input type="checkbox"/> Repaired and Returned to Service <input type="checkbox"/> Disposed of (Explain Below) <input type="checkbox"/> To Overhaul Facility (INITIALS)			

GIVE COMPLETE DETAILS, PROBABLE CAUSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS BELOW:  
(See Only Applicable Spaces Above—Avoid Unnecessary Repetition)

EXPEDITE

Pilot claimed that Nos. 3 and 4 engines did not have power at time of crash. Aircraft B17G 43-38542 crashed into trees tearing all four (4) propellers off and three (3) engines (Nos. 1, 2, 3) from their mounts. This usually indicates that all four (4) engines had power.

The four engines (No. 1 - SW005103, No. 2 - SW012626, No. 3 - SW011170 and No. 4 - SW023834) had only 10:15 hours on them since overhaul at start of mission. All of this time was slow time and altitude check time to be sure all four engines were functioning properly. All four engines were in excellent condition at mission take-off time.

The Group Aircraft Engineering Officer was not notified of any suspected material failure until too late to check the engines.

*John M. Palmer*  
JOHN M. PALMER,  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Station Materiel Officer.

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ROUTING

SEND ORIGINAL AND TWO COPIES DIRECT TO COMMANDING GENERAL,  
HQ. AIR SERVICE COMMAND, PATTERSON FIELD, FAIRFIELD, OHIO.

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