

WAR DEPARTMENT

U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

ACCIDENT No. 45-5-16-512

6-7

54

4

(1) Place AAF Station 106 (2) Date 16 May 1945 (3) Time 1800  
AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model B-17G DO (5) A. F. No. 42-97986 (6) Station 106  
Organization: (7) 8th (8) 38th Bomb (H) 54th Bomb (H)  
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)

PERSONNEL BH

Z 354

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	Welsh, James H.	P	O-828474	1st Lt	18	AC	8th	None	None
CO	Grimm, Karel A.	P	O-1639106	1st Lt	18	AC	8th	"	"
CO	Reynolds, Edward H.	P	O-836637	2nd Lt	18	AC	8th	"	"
N	Bernard, Kenneth (NMI)	N	O-2077696	2nd Lt	18	AC	8th	"	"
RO	Miller, Lester E.		37724170	Sgt	38	AC	8th	"	"
TT	Rank, William J.		17118159	Sgt	38	AC	8th	"	"
E	Schwertfeger, Norman H.		37740273	Sgt	38	AC	8th	"	"

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

(20) Welsh James H (21) O-828474 (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 (H) 54th Bomb (H) (28) AAF Station 106  
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)  
Attached for flying (29) 8th (30) 38th Bomb (H) (31) 54th Bomb (H) (32) AAF Station 106  
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)

Original rating (33) Pilot (34) 15 Apr 44 Present rating (35) Pilot (36) 15 Apr 44 Instrument rating (37) 18 May 44  
(Rating) (Date) (Rating) (Date)

FIRST PILOT HOURS:

(at the time of this accident)

(38) This type B-17G 223:30 (42) Instrument time last 6 months 28:55  
(39) This model B-17G 223:30 (43) Instrument time last 30 days 6:15  
(40) Last 90 days 176:00 (44) Night time last 6 months  
(41) Total All Types 223:30 (45) Night time last 30 days

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

DAMAGE	(46) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(46) Aircraft <u>M 3 3 3</u>	Major damage to #2, 3 & 4 engines & props; stations
(47) Engine(s) <u>M 3 M 3 M 3</u>	1, 2 & 3. Minor damage to right side of cock-pit
(48) Propeller(s) <u>M 3 M 3 M 3</u>	between stations 3 & 4. Bomb bay doors wrinkled and
	slight damage to station 7. Salvaged by 2nd SAD.
(49) Weather at the time of accident	<u>10/10th, base 1000 Ft. 6 mi Vis, wind S W 15 MPH</u>

(51) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident No  
(52) Cleared from Station 106 (53) To Station 106 (54) Kind of clearance Contact

(55) Pilot's mission Training

(56) Nature of accident Aircraft nosed over while taxiing after right tire blew out.

(57) Cause of accident Blown tire while taxiing.

(58) Has form 54 been submitted? No.

7-42

6-13

# DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

Just prior to the accident the aircraft in question had had the armor and armor plate removed, making the tail lighter than on those B-17 aircraft the pilot had been accustomed to flying. The ship made a normal landing on runway 24, turned right onto the perimeter track and apparently taxiing at a slow rate of speed, (5-10 MPH) downwind, when after about 50 yards the right tire blew out. Because of a 15-20 MPH tail wind, slightly from the left of the tail, and the slow rate of taxi, the wind was sufficiently strong in preventing the aircraft from turning appreciably to the right after the blow-out. Ship rolled from 40 to 50 feet, the tail started coming up and the ship nosed over.

According to statements from pilot and engineer no brakes were used in stopping the aircraft. The investigating committee believes that sufficient speed was lost from the deceleration of the aircraft after the tire blew out to momentarily raise the tail. However, it does seem plausible to the Board that braking action must have been used which of course would materially aid in bringing up the tail. Apparently as soon as the tail started to rise the pilot's immediate reaction was to pull the stick back. Engines had been throttled back while taxiing; the wind blowing directly on the raised elevators probably aided in completing the nose over.

The accident could possibly have been avoided if the ship had been dead weighted in the tail while operating under a minimum load condition and during a brisk wind. Possibly if the pilot had realized that his tail had started to rise soon enough and had used an application of power when he pulled the stick back he might have succeeded in forcing the tail back down.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** That all ships with armor and armor plate removed be equipped with some dead weight in the tail when the aircraft is being flown under minimum weight conditions. That all pilots be repeatedly cautioned concerning taxiing problems with light aircraft.

**IMMEDIATE CAUSE:** Unknown.

**UNDERLYING CAUSE:** Blow out of right tire while taxiing. Tail wind aided in nose over after stick was pulled back. The aircraft had armor and armor plate removed moving CG forward. Pilot was not accustomed to new CG although it was well within the limits prescribed for B-17 operation.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Undetermined.

## Aircraft Accident Committee:

*Clarence L. Thacker*  
CLARENCE L. THACKER,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Pilot - President.

*Philip Y. Williams*  
PHILIP Y. WILLIAMS,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Pilot - Member.

*John M. Palmer*  
JOHN M. PALMER,  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Engineering Officer - Member.

*Jacob R. Haley*  
JACOB R. HALEY,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Flying Control Officer (ex-officio).

*Arthur L. Foley*  
ARTHUR L. FOLEY,  
Captain, MC,  
Flight Surgeon (ex-officio).

*Alexander L. Jones*  
ALEXANDER L. JONES,  
1st Lt., Air Corps,  
Intelligence Officer (ex-officio).

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
(Investigating Officer)

Date 22 May, 1945.

DATE 16 May 1945		STATION 106, England		GROUP NO. & TYPE 384 Bomb (H)		AIRCRAFT MODEL B-17G				
CREW CHIEF OR AERIAL ENGINEER M/Sgt Louis Hopps				SQUADRON NO. & TYPE 545 Bomb (H)		AIRCRAFT SERIAL NO. 42-97986				
PERS. CLASS	- PRINT PLAINLY - NAME - ASN. - GRADE - ORGANIZATION			USE AS DIRECTED LOCALLY	ALWAYS ENTER DUTY SYMBOLS. WHEN APPLICABLE, ENTER N - NIGHT OR I - INSTRUMENT. ENTER TIME FLOWN THEREUNDER				FLIGHT DATA	
					DUTY	N	O	R	I	DUTY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
18	Welsh, James H., 1st Lt, O-1824544	545th	R	1:15	:	:	:	:	FROM: 106	07 25
18	Grimm, Karel A., 1st Lt, O-1639106	545th	QD	1:15	:	:	:	:	TO: 106	09 00
18	Reynolds, Edward M., 2nd Lt, O-836637	545th	QD	1:15	:	:	:	:	MISSION:	NO. OF LANDINGS 01:15
18	Bernard, Kenneth, 2nd Lt, O-2077696	545th	N	1:15	:	:	:	:	FROM:	:
38	Rank, William J, Sgt, 17118159	545th	E	1:15	:	:	:	:	TO:	:
38	Schwertfeger, Norman H., Sgt, 37740273	545th	G	1:15	:	:	:	:	MISSION:	NO. OF LANDINGS 1
38	Miller, Lester E., Jr, Sgt, 37724170	545th	R	1:15	:	:	:	:	FROM:	:
					:	:	:	:	TO:	:
					:	:	:	:	MISSION:	NO. OF LANDINGS
					:	:	:	:	FROM:	:
					:	:	:	:	TO:	:
					:	:	:	:	MISSION:	NO. OF LANDINGS
					:	:	:	:	FROM:	:
					:	:	:	:	TO:	:
					:	:	:	:	MISSION:	NO. OF LANDINGS
					:	:	:	:	FROM:	:
					:	:	:	:	TO:	:
					:	:	:	:	MISSION:	NO. OF LANDINGS

A TRUE COPY:  
*William R. Kinnaid*  
 WILLIAM R KINNAIRD  
 Capt, Air Corps  
 Operations Officer

WAR DEPARTMENT  
 A. A. F. FORM NO. 1  
 REV. (1 JAN. 44)

AIRPLANE FLIGHT REPORT - OPERATIONS

CHECKED:  
 LEGIBLE AND  
 CORRECT

TRANSCRIBED:  
 TOTAL FLIGHT  
 TIME ENTERED  
 IN FORM 1A

TOTAL  
 FLIGHT  
 TIME 01:15

# AIRPLANE FLIGHT REPORT - ENGINEERING

INSPECTION STATUS				SERVING AT STATION OF TAKE-OFF (IMMEDIATELY BEFORE TAKE-OFF)										
DATE OF OR HOURS DUE	INSPECTED TODAY			FUEL (GALLONS)	OIL (QUARTS)								RADIATOR CHECKED	
	BY	STATION			NO. 1		NO. 2		NO. 3		NO. 4			
PREFLIGHT	15/5/45	HOPPS	106	SERV- ICED	IN TANKS	SERV- ICED	IN TANKS	SERV- ICED	IN TANKS	SERV- ICED	IN TANKS	SERV- ICED	IN TANKS	
DAILY	15/5/45	HOPPS	106											
25 HOURS	597:00			1ST	700	1700	4	140	0	140	0	140	0	140
50 HOURS	622:00			2ND										
100 HOURS	672:00			3RD										
				4TH										
				5TH										

  

INSPECTION OF AUXILIARY EQUIPMENT				STATUS TODAY		EXPLANATION: COMPASS WING DUE: #1 & #4 PRIMER ELBOWS NOT MOD: FLUX GATE COMPASS INOP:
EQUIPMENT	SYMBOL	INSPECTED BY	STATION	1.	2.	
BOMBARDMENT						
GUNNERY						
CHEMICAL						
COMMUNICATIONS	L	LONGBAUGH				
PHOTOGRAPHIC						
NAVIGATION						

  

EXCEPTIONAL RELEASE  
WHEN THE "STATUS TODAY" IS INDICATED BY A RED SYMBOL,  
AND AN "EXCEPTIONAL RELEASE" HAS NOT BEEN GRANTED  
BY AN AUTHORIZED MAINTENANCE OFFICER, THE PILOT OF THE  
AIRCRAFT WILL SIGN THIS RELEASE BEFORE FLIGHT.

RELEASED FOR FLIGHT: 1. C.M. REYOLD

  

REMARKS: PILOTS AND MECHANICS - SEE INSTRUCTIONS INSIDE FRONT COVER.	AIRCRAFT AND ENGINE TIME RECORD (ENTER IN HOURS AND MINUTES)				
	ENGINE	NO. 1	NO. 2	NO. 3	NO. 4
FLUXGATE COMPASS OK - HOPPS	HOURS TO DATE	189:25	2555	31:45	17:10
MASTER INDICATOR REPLACED	HOURS TODAY	4:00	4:00	4:00	4:00
	TOTAL	19325	2955	3845	2110
	OIL CHANGE DUE				
	CUMULATIVE CLEANING DUE				
	AIRCRAFT	HOURS TO DATE	614:45		
		HOURS TODAY	1:00		
		TOTAL	61845		

  

A TRUE COPY: *Thomas P. Davis*  
THOMAS P. DAVIS  
Capt. Air Corps  
Op. Engr. Off.

  

DATE	AIRCRAFT ORG. DATA	AIRCRAFT DATA	ENGINE DATA	
15/5/45	AIR FORCE 8TH	COMPONENT	ENGINE MODEL R-1820-97	
STATION 106	COMD., SERV. COMD. OR DEPT 1ST WING	BOMBARDMENT	SERIAL NO. SW-033369	SERIAL NO. SW-027765
CREW CHIEF OR ENGINEER HOPPS	GROUP NO. & TYPE 384TH BOMB (H)	AIRCRAFT MODEL B-17G	SERIAL NO. 41-23685	SERIAL NO. 41-41926
	SQUADRON NO. & TYPE 545TH BOMB (H)	AIRCRAFT SERIAL NO. 14-9786	TOTAL FLIGHT TIME → 04:00	



**RESTRICTED**

FOLLOWING IS STATEMENT OF THE AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT BY 1st LT JAMES H. WELSH,  
ASN C-1824544, ON 16 MAY 1945 IN AIRCRAFT B-17 G # 42-97986

Landed on runway 2-4, turned right on perimeter track and was taxiing downwind. Wind velocity was approximately twenty (20) miles per hour.

Tail wheel was locked, controls were unlocked, stick was forward and throttles were all the way back. The right tire blew out and no brakes were applied. Plane was rolling fairly straight on perimeter track.

As forward momentum was lost the tail came up and in spite of all efforts pulling the stick back and using throttle, the ship nosed up, damaging nose and No. 2, 3 and 4 props. There were no casualties. I had noticed a definite nose heaviness in this aircraft both in the air and on the ground. I was in the right seat.

*James H. Welsh*

JAMES H. WELSH,  
1st Lt., Air Corps  
Instructor Pilot  
545th Bomb Sq  
384th Bomb Gp

**RESTRICTED**

*Incl 21*

RESTRICTED

FOLLOWING IS STATEMENT OF THE AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT BY KAREL A. GRIMM,  
ASN C-1639106, ON 16 MAY 1945, IN AIRCRAFT B-17 G # 42-27906

I was standing behind the seats with the Engineer. The taxi speed was slow and we had a tail wind. The wheel was slightly forward. When the tire blew out the plane nosed up and I did not notice whether the throttles or brakes were used.

I do not think the accident could have been avoided because of the weight removed from the aft part of the plane and also because of the tail wind. I also noticed the lightness of the tail when I flew it the previous day.

*Karel A. Grimm*

KAREL A. GRIMM,  
1st Lt., Air Corps  
Pilot  
545th Bomb Sq  
384th Bomb Gp

Sub 3'  
RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

FOLLOWING IS STATEMENT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT BY 2nd. LT EDWARD M. REYNOLDS  
ASN 0-836637, ON 16 th. MAY 1945, IN B-17 G, AIRCRAFT # 42-97986

1. Landed on runway 2-4-0 and made right hand turn onto the perimeter track. Had gone a short distance with the wind to our back, when the right tire blew. I had about 600 R.P.M. on the inboards and about the same on the outboards. I did not apply any brake, and had gone only a short distance when the tail came up. I pulled back on the stick and added some throttle to try and get it back down. The extent of the damage was #2,3 and 4 props being ruined and the nose badly damaged, I was in the left seat.

2. There were no personnel injured.

*Edward M. Reynolds*

EDWARD M. REYNOLDS,  
2nd. LT. AIR CORPS,  
PILOT,  
545th BOMB SQUADRON  
384th. BOMB GROUP

RESTRICTED

Serial 4'

RESTRICTED

R-C-1.

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

16 May. 1945.

SUBJECT: Aircraft Accident.

TO : COMMANDING OFFICER, AAF Station No. 106, APO 557, U. S. Army.

1. At approximately 0850 hours B-17 No. 7986, pilot Walsh, was taxiing on the perimeter track near dispersal 46 after having made a landing on runway 24. The right tire blew out and the aircraft nosed over on the perimeter, driving the chin turret up into the nose and damaging No. 2, 3, and 4 props.

2. Operations, Engineering and Photo Lab were informed immediately. Ambulance and crash tender were dispatched from the Control Tower. No one was injured and there was no damage to the airfield or property other than the aircraft itself.

*Charles W. Overton*  
CHARLES W. OVERTON,  
1st Lt., A. C.  
F. C. O.

RESTRICTED

Incl 5'



RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS  
AAF STATION NO. 106  
Office of the Intelligence Officer

D-7-6

23 May 1945,  
APO 557.

SUBJECT: Intelligence Officers Report on Aircraft Accident Involving Aircraft  
B-17-G Number 42-97986, 16 May 1945.

TO : Commanding General, Headquarters, 1st Air Division, APO 557, US Army.

1. The following report covering subject is hereby submitted.

FACTS: Aircraft Number 42-97986 piloted by 1st Lt. James E. Welsh, O-828474, 545th Bomb Squadron, 384th Bomb Group, Station 106, APO 557, was taxiing at a slow rate of speed downwind when the right tire blew out. There was a 15 - 20 M.P.H. tail wind. The plane continued to taxi 40 - 50 feet when the tail started to come up and the plane nosed over. The plane recently had all armor plate removed.

FINDINGS: From all the facts presented there is no evidence of sabotage to be pursued in this case.

*Alexander L. Jones*  
ALEXANDER L. JONES,  
1st Lt., Air Corps,  
Intell. Officer Number.

RESTRICTED

*Encl 8*

# RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS  
AAF STATION NO. 106  
Office of the Station Commander

APO 557,  
23 May, 1945.

SUBJECT: Letter of Transmittal.

TO : Commanding General, 1st Air Division, APO 557.

Transmitted herewith is AAF Form 14 and allied papers on aircraft B-170 42-97986, which was involved in an accident on 16 May 1945.

For the Station Commander:



*Harold Nelson, Jr.*  
Harold Nelson, Jr.,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Adjutant.

9 Incls:

- Incl 1 AAF Form 14 (in quad).
- Incl 2 Instructor Pilots Statement (in quad).
- Incl 3 Pilots Statement (in quad).
- Incl 4 Co-pilots Statement (in quad).
- Incl 5 Flying Control Officers Statement (in quad).
- Incl 6 AAF Form 1 (in quad)
- Incl 7 AAF Form 1A (in quad).
- Incl 8 Intelligence Officers Statement (in quad)
- Incl 9 Photographs (2 sets, 4 prints ea)

360.33 1st Ind. (E/R/8)  
HEADQUARTERS 1ST AIR DIVISION, APO 557, 26 May 1945.

TO: Commanding General, Eighth Air Force, AAF Station 101, APO 634.

Forwarded in compliance with Paragraph 1, Section V, Eighth Air Force Memorandum 60-1, dated 27 March 1944.

MAY 28 1945  
FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL:



*Harry T. Hance*  
HARRY T. HANCE  
Major, AGD  
Asst. Adjutant General

9 Incls:  
n/c (in trip)

# RESTRICTED

360.33 1st W/Ind.  
Hq. Eighth Air Force, APO 634, % Postmaster, New York.

E-M-55

JUN 1 1945

To: Chief, Flying Safety, AAF, Winston-Salem 1, N.C.

1. Transmitted herewith WD AAF Form No. 14 and allied papers on the following aircraft accident:

a. 1st Lt. James H. Welsh, B-17G number 42-97986.

2. This headquarters does not concur in assessment as 100% undetermined. It is felt that a better assessment would be 100% miscellaneous, further subdivided as 30% materiel failure, tire; 30% weather; 40% c.g. factor. The general heading of miscellaneous is given because no single one of these factors would have caused this accident; only the combination that existed at this particular moment could have resulted in this specific accident.

FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL:

  
BURN E ARCHER  
Maj. AGD.  
Asst. Adj. Gen.

1 Incl: as above.



