

**RESTRICTED**

ACCIDENT No. 139

WAR DEPARTMENT

U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

**REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT**

44-433-27

1-501

(1) Place Crafton Underwood (2) Date 25 April, 1944 (3) Time 0740

AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model B-17-G 040 (5) A. F. No. 2-31484 (6) Station 106

Organization: (7) 8th Air Force (8) 384 Bomb(H) (9) 545 Bombardment(H) (10) Z 354  
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)

8 PERSONNEL BH

DDT	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)
	F. Helmley, Loyd E.		P 0-737948	1st Lt.	01	AC	8th AF	None	None
	CP. Hailey, Mille, Z. Jr.		P 0-818863	2nd Lt.	01	AC	8th AF	None	None
	N. Kranick, Martin E.		N 0-683188	2nd Lt.	301	AC	8th AF	None	None
	RO. Geriak, John, (NMI)		RO 311660	S/Sgt.	3820	AC	8th AF	None	None



**PILOT CHECKED WITH ACCIDENT**

(20) Helmley, Loyd E. (21) 0-737948 (22) 1st Lt. (23) 01 (24) AC  
(Last name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Serial number) (Rank) (Personnel class) (Branch)

Assigned (25) 8th Air Force (26) 384 Bomb(H) (27) 545 Bombardment(H) (28) 106 (29) Z 354  
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)

Attached for flying (30) 8th Air Force (31) 384 Bomb(H) (32) 545 Bomb(H) (33) 106  
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)

Original rating (34) Pilot (35) 6-2-43 Present rating (36) Pilot (37) 6-2-43 Instrument rating (38) None  
(Rating) (Date) (Rating) (Date) (Date)

**FIRST PILOT HOURS:**

(at the time of this accident)

(39) This type	<u>292:50</u>	(42) Instrument time last 6 months	<u>03:00</u>
(40) This model	<u>254:30</u>	(43) Instrument time last 30 days	<u>03:00</u>
(44) Last 90 days	<u>251:45</u>	(44) Night time last 6 months	<u>09:50</u>
(41) Total	<u>726:15</u>	(45) Night time last 30 days	<u>09:50</u>

**AIRCRAFT DAMAGE**

DAMAGE	(49) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(46) Aircraft	<u>Left wing tip and panel, flap assembly,</u>
(47) Engine(s)	<u>number one (1) supercharger, and landing</u>
(48) Propeller(s)	<u>gear shaft.</u>

(50) Weather at the time of accident Clear - Visibility seven (7) miles, Wind Northwest at thirteen (13) miles per hour.

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

(52) Cleared from 106 Z 354 (53) To Bortad Z 116 (54) Kind of clearance Contact  
Gear would not extend at Bortad, so returned to station 106.

(55) Pilot's mission Ferrying

(56) Nature of accident Structural failure.

(57) Cause of accident Left landing gear shaft broke, left gear could not be extended.

(58) Form 54 not submitted.

06-34

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DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

It is the opinion of this board the accident was one hundred (100) percent mechanical failure.

Apparently, the landing gear "Retracting and extending shaft" broke when gear was retracted after take-off.

Left landing gear could not be extended regardless of tactics used by CoPilot and Engineer.

Lieutenant Helmley made a one (1) wheel landing on home airdrome as ordered by the Deputy Group Commander.

Signature

*Thomas P. Beckett*  
(Investigating Officer)

Thomas P. Beckett, Lt. Col., AC

*Arthur M. Stone Jr.*  
Arthur M. Stone Jr., Capt., AC

*Charles W. Bishop*  
Charles W. Bishop, 1st Lt., AC

Date 30 April, 1944

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AAF STATION #106  
APO #557  
ENGLAND

SUBJECT: Report of Accident of Aircraft 42-31484 on 24 April 1944.

TO : Commanding Officer, AAF Station #106, England.

1. I took off at 2045 on 24 April 1944 for the purpose of flying to Borted to bring Lt C G Smith and Crew back to this base.
2. When I approached the field I received instructions from the Borted Tower to enter the traffic pattern and land. As I started to enter the pattern, I put my landing gear switch in the down position, but only my right wheel came down. I called the Tower and asked permission to keep circling in their pattern. My Co-Pilot then took the landing gear crank and attempted to crank the left wheel down but was unsuccessful. We then checked all fuses and tried to lower the gear again electrically, but still only the right wheel would come down. After it was down, I tried to shake the left wheel down by rocking the airplane from side to side and up and down. After I had done this, I called the Borted Tower and told them I was returning to my home base at Grafton Underwood and that I would be unable to land at the Borted Field.
3. My Navigator gave me a course to my home base and meanwhile the Co-Pilot and Radio Operator were working in the bomb bay trying to lower the wheel but had no success.
4. Upon reaching Grafton Underwood, I called the Tower and asked for instructions. My instructions were to stand by for order from Lt Col Buck. When Lt Col Buck reached the Tower, he asked my gas load, and at that time, 2200 hours, my gas load was 2300 gallons. He gave me the following instructions and told me to contact the Tower by (R/T) on the hour and the half hour all night and I would receive further instructions from the Tower. He then told me to lower my RPM to 1800 and my manifold pressure to 26 inches and to circle the field perimeter lights at an altitude of 1500 feet. Having followed all of his instructions, I then monitored the radio until 2330 hours and gave the Tower a call but received no further instructions. From then on I called in at the specified time and received no instructions until 0200 hours when the Tower told me to open my spare gas tanks. I did as ordered and continued circling. When I called the Tower at 0300 hours my gas gauge was inoperative so I estimated my gas consumption and amount left until 0700 hours. At this time Lt Col Buck called me and gave me the following instructions: To have my Navigator and Radio Operator in the radio room and in ditching position and for the Co-Pilot and myself to tighten safety belts. Upon completion of this, he told me to lower my right wheel, make a normal approach to the field with full flaps and to land with my right wheel on the runway and my left wing over the grass, and also as soon as I hit the ground to cut ignition switches and fuel shut-off valves.

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5. After receiving these orders, I made one circle around the field and came in on final approach but as I was about to land, the Tower gave instructions to go around as I was landing too far down the runway. I used a normal "go around" procedure and came in on final approach for my final landing. As soon as I touched the ground the ignition switches were cut and orders followed as given by Lt Col Buck.

6. Landing time was 0735 hours, 25 April 1944. No personnel aboard the ship was injured.

*Lloyd E. Helmley*

LOYD E HELMLEY  
1st Lt, Air Corps  
Pilot

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HEADQUARTERS  
AAF STATION NO 106  
Office of the Flying Control Officer

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R-A-2

25 April, 1944.

SUBJECT: Crash Landing of B-17 #1484.

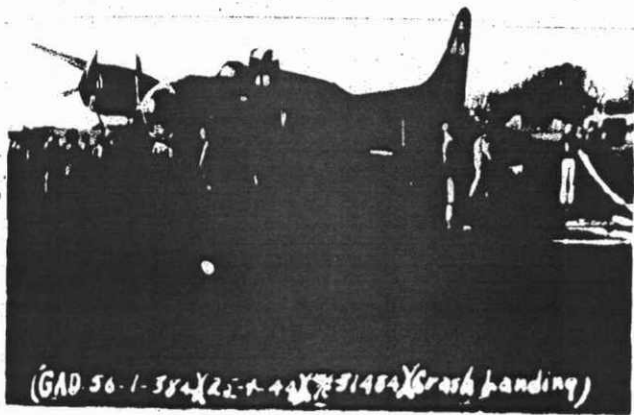
TO: COMMANDING OFFICER, AAF Station No. 106.

1. On or about 2050 hours, 24 April, 1944, aircraft 1484 was unable to lower left wheel. He was advised to circle drone until the morning of 25, April.

2. Still being unable to lower his left wheel, he made a successful crash landing on Runway 30 at 0740 hours, 25 April, 1944.

*J.R. Burkholder*  
J.R. BURKHOLDER,  
1st Lt., Air Corps,  
Flying Control Officer.

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(GAD 56-1-58-22-1-44X751484XGrash landing)