

**RESTRICTED**  
**SECRET**  
WAR DEPARTMENT  
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES  
**REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT**

ACCIDENT No. 42-12-16-517

(1) Place North Lodge, Grimsby, LINCS. (2) Date 14 December 1944 (3) Time 17:45  
AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model P-17G De (5) A. F. No. 44-2421 (6) Station AAF 106  
Organization: (7) 8th (8) 381st Bomb (H) (9) 516th Bomb (H) (10) 4  
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)

PERSONNEL BH

DOVT (30)	NAME (Last name first) (11)	RATING (18)	SERIAL NO. (12)	RANK (14)	PERSONNEL CLASS (15)	BRANCH (16)	AIR FORCE OR COMMAND (17)	RESULT TO PERSONNEL (18)	USE OF PARACHUTE (19)
P	Brookshire, James D.	P	0-1010760	1st Lt.	18	AC	8th	None	None
C	Koutrouba, Evan P.	P	0-836612	2nd Lt.	18	AC	"	"	"
N	Mechanic, Harold (M.I.)	N	0-553182	1st Lt.	18	AC	"	"	"
TOC	Hiner, William H.		37677069	S/Sgt.	38	AC	"	"	"
R	Wilhelm, Robert F.		36296406	T/Sgt.	38	AC	"	"	"
TT	Rivers, Arthur E.		34771976	T/Sgt.	38	AC	"	"	"
BT	Hess, Frank (M.I.)		36686118	S/Sgt.	38	AC	"	"	"
TC	McClosky, Arthur L.		12136905	S/Sgt.	38	AC	"	"	"
FC	Gustitus, Clarence C.		13025116	S/Sgt.	38	AC	"	"	"

**RESTRICTED**  
CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED BY FCX DATE 2-7-46

**PILOT INFORMATION AND RECORD**

(20) Brookshire James D. (21) 0-1010760 (22) 1st Lt. (23) 18 (24) AC  
(Last name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Serial number) (Rank) (Personnel class) (Branch)  
Assigned (25) 8th (26) 381st Bomb (H) (27) 516th Bomb (H) (28) AAF 106  
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)  
Attached for flying (29) 8th (30) (31) (32)  
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)  
Original rating (33) Pilot (34) 5-12-43 Present rating (35) Pilot (36) 5-12-43 Instrument rating (37) 1-5-44  
(Rating) (Date) (Rating) (Date) (Date)

First Pilot Hours:  
(at the time of this accident) O.R. T.O. - 1 (2)  
(38) This type 382:45 (42) Instrument time last 6 months 49:20  
(39) This model 296:40 (43) Instrument time last 30 days 22:20  
(40) Last 90 days 194:55 (44) Night time last 6 months 5:10  
(41) Total 516:45 (45) Night time last 30 days 5:10

**AIRCRAFT DAMAGE**

DAMAGE	(49) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(46) Aircraft <u>W</u>	Fuselage, Right wing and right stabilizer twisted beyond practical repair.
(47) Engine(s) <u>1</u>	
(48) Propeller(s) <u>1</u>	

(50) Weather at the time of accident Cloud: 5/10 fractostratus at 600 ft. (estimated 10/10 nimbostratus, base uncertain but estimated at 2000 ft. shortly afterwards. Visibility: (horizontally) 1100 yds. Surface Wind: South-east 15 MPH. Continuous Slight Drizzle. VM

(51) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident No.  
(52) Cleared from AAF Station 106 (53) To Combat (54) Kind of clearance Operational  
(55) Pilot's mission Operational

(56) Nature of accident Landing accident - A/C skidded sideways into a ditch off of runway.

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U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

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**REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT**

(1) Place North Dakota, Minn. (2) Date 12 December 1951 (3) Time 18:45  
 AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model P-17G-7 (5) A. P. No. 11-3421 (6) Station 106  
 Organization: (7) 8th (8) 38th Bomb (H) (9) 546th Bomb (H)  
 (Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)

**PERSONNEL**

DUTY (10)	NAME (Last name first) (11)	RATING (12)	SERIAL No. (13)	RANK (14)	PERSONNEL CLASS (15)	BRANCH (16)	AIR FORCE OR COMMAND (17)	RESULTS TO PERSONNEL (18)	USE OF PARACHUTE (19)
P	Brookshire, James D.	P	0-1010760	1st Lt.	18	AC	8th	None	None
C	Koutrouba, Ryan P.	P	0-836612	2nd Lt.	18	AC	"	"	"
J	Lechanick, Harold (M.T.)	M	0-553482	1st Lt.	18	AC	"	"	"
TTC	Hinar, William H.		37677069	S/Sgt.	38	AC	"	"	"
B	Wilhelm, Robert F.		36296406	T/Sgt.	38	AC	"	"	"
TT	Rivers, Arthur E.		34771976	T/Sgt.	38	AC	"	"	"
BT	Hess, Frank (CET)		36686148	S/Sgt.	36	AC	"	"	"
TG	McClosky, Arthur L.		12136905	S/Sgt.	38	AC	"	"	"
FE	Gustitus, Clarence G.		13025146	S/Sgt.	38	AC	"	"	"

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 CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED BY CG DATE 7-7-46  
 BY FCA

(20) Brookshire James D. (21) 0-1010760 (22) 1st Lt. (23) 18 AC  
 (Last name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Serial number) (Rank) (Personnel class) (Branch)  
 Assigned (25) 8th (26) 38th Bomb (H) (27) 546th Bomb (H) (28) AAF 106  
 (Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)  
 Attached for flying (29) 8th (30) (31) (32)  
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 Original rating (33) Pilot (34) 5-12-43 Present rating (35) Pilot (36) 5-12-43 Instrument rating (37) 4-5-44  
 (Rating) (Date) (Rating) (Date) (Date) (Date)

FIRST PILOT HOURS: (at the time of this accident) O.R. - T.O. - 1  
 (38) This type 382:45 (42) Instrument time last 6 months 49:20  
 (39) This model 296:40 (43) Instrument time last 30 days 22:20  
 (40) Last 90 days 124:55 (44) Night time last 6 months 5:10  
 (41) Total 516:45 (45) Night time last 30 days 5:10

**PROPS** **AIRCRAFT DAMAGE** **NI=**

DAMAGE	(49) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(46) Aircraft <u>W</u>	Fuselage, Right wing and right stabilizer twisted beyond practical repair.
(47) Engine(s)	
(48) Propeller(s)	

(50) Weather at the time of accident Cloud: 5/10 fractostratus at 600 ft. (estimated 10/10 nimbostratus, base uncertain but estimated at 2000 ft. shortly afterwards.) Visibility: (horizontally) 1400 yds. Surface Wind: South-east 15 MPH. Continuous Slight Drizzle. VM

(51) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident No.  
 (52) Cleared from AAF Station 106 (53) To Combat (54) Kind of clearance Operational 2

(55) Pilot's mission Operational 1

(56) Nature of accident Landing accident - A/C skidded sideways into a ditch off of runway.

(57) Cause of accident A/C was forced to land because of bad weather. Conditions were such that the pilot was unable to bring the A/C under complete control before sliding off end of runway into ditch. The prevailing weather conditions and malfunctioning of navigational equipment were responsible for the decisions made and the technique employed.

(58) Has Form 54 been submitted? Yes. 73-80

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DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

Lt. Brookshire was flying the lead position of the high flight on a routine operational mission. During the assembly period, his radio compass went out, and shortly afterwards, his Gee box became inoperative. Due to inclement weather, the mission was scrubbed and the formation was diverted to a field in northern England.

The formation leader announced the Group's position at Splasher 4 and all aircraft executed a standard let down by individual airplanes. Lt. Brookshire broke out with 150 feet of altitude and 800 yards visibility. From the break out point, they took a "DR" heading to the designated diversion field. However, due to poor visibility they were unable to find the field and because of the surrounding terrain features, were forced back into the overcast. They proceeded back to Splasher 4 by aural-null methods but as the compass was not functioning properly, it was difficult to ascertain whether or not they were at Splasher 4 at any time. From there, they took a heading of 90 degrees to the east coast of England and let down over the North Sea where they jettisoned their bombs. The aircraft was still to be considered a heavy aircraft however, because they had approximately 2400 gallons of gasoline and it was otherwise completely loaded for an operational flight. While over the North Sea, the ceiling was so low that when the pilot made his 180 degree turn to head back to land, he was again forced into the overcast. Upon reaching the coast he turned and paralleled it so that he could find one of the fields known to be in that vicinity. The field chosen was North Coates.

The wind was almost 90 degrees to the only runway, length of which was 4,320 feet long, and slick due to a recent rainfall. The ceiling was becoming lower and visibility lessening as time went on. Lt. Brookshire decided that he had better land there in preference to attempting to locate a more desirable field. Six individual efforts were made to land before they were finally able to align themselves with the runway and land.

The caravan operator tried to aid Lt. Brookshire by using the aldis lamp and firing flares, but as he had to make an angular approach to the field, and because of the obstruction of a capsized destroyer on the final approach, it was very difficult to land his aircraft. Also making things more difficult was the fact that the flares were being blown out to the side of the runway. A dyke eight feet high offered another obstruction to the runway.

Lt. Brookshire brought his airplane in on the final approach at about 110 MPH, cleared the dyke by approximately 10 feet, and landed in the first 100 yards of the runway. Because of the cross wind, he was forced to use the starboard engines as an aid in staying on the runway. It was also necessary to stay on the runway because of the hanger line and aircraft which were on the right and a torpedo dump which was about 75 feet from the edge of the runway on the left. When Lt. Brookshire realized that he was not going to be able to stop before reaching the end of the runway, it was too late for him to go around. There was a ditch approximately 200 feet from the end of the runway which he was not aware of until he was in the grass off the end of the airstrip. He then immediately attempted to ground loop the aircraft but because the ground was slick, he was only able to get it sideways before the plane slid into the ditch.

RESPONSIBILITY: It is the opinion of this Board the responsibility for this accident should be allocated as follows: 85% to the weather and 15% to the failure of navigational aids, namely the radio compass and Gee box which prevented Lt. Brookshire from locating his diversion field.

Signature *George H. Koehne, Jr.*  
GEORGE H. KOEHNE, JR., Col., AC.  
(Investigating Officer)

*Alexander C. Strickland*  
ALEXANDER C. STRICKLAND, MAJ., AC.

*Arthur E. Bean, Jr.*  
ARTHUR E. BEAN, Maj., AC.

Date 26 December 1944

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RECOMMENDATIONS: It is felt that it is not this Board's prerogative to make any recommendations for taking preventative action, inasmuch as higher headquarters determines the necessity for scheduling operational missions under such adverse weather conditions.

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STATEMENT BY 1ST LT. J. D. BROOKSHIRE, O-1910760, PILOT, CONCERNING AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT, B-17G 44-8421, ON 16 DECEMBER 1944.

WE HAD A NORMAL TAKE OFF. ASSEMBLY WAS A LITTLE DIFFICULT DUE TO THE RADIO COMPASS INDICATOR BEING INOPERATIVE. AFTER ASSEMBLY, WE TOOK OFF ON COURSE AND WERE DIVERTED. THE NAVIGATOR INFORMED ME THAT THE GEN EQUIPMENT WAS OUT. WE PROCEEDED TOWARDS THE DESIGNATED DIVERSION FIELD. WE WERE DIVERTED TO THE NORTH SEA TO DROP OUR BOMBS AND OUR NAVIGATOR PICKED UP THE APPROXIMATE POSITION THERE. WE TOOK A HEADING TOWARDS ANOTHER FIELD. BEFORE WE ARRIVED THERE, THAT FIELD WAS CHANGED AND WE TOOK A HEADING TO THE SECOND DIVERSION FIELD. THE NAVIGATOR COULD NOT KEEP HIMSELF LOCATED, FLYING OVER 10/10THS. THE GROUP LEADER PASSED OUT THE INFORMATION ON THE INSTRUMENT LET DOWN ON SPLASHER 4. HE GAVE A HEADING AND DISTANCE FROM SPLASHER 4 TO THE DIVERSION FIELD. HAVING NO RADIO COMPASS, I PEELED OFF AND FOLLOWED THE SHIP AHEAD OF ME TO THE SPOT WHERE HE ENTERED THE OVERCAST AND I FLEW OUT ON MY HEADING. WHEN I BROKE THROUGH ON THE BOTTOM, I HAD APPROXIMATELY 150 FEET SO I TOOK THE RECIPROCAL HEADING AND FLEW BACK TO WHERE I THOUGHT THE BUNCHER SHOULD HAVE BEEN. FROM THERE, I TOOK THE HEADING TO THE FIELD. AS THE NAVIGATOR'S ETA RAN OUT, WE BEGAN A SEARCH FOR THE FIELD, BUT WERE UNABLE TO FIND IT AND DECIDED TO CLIMB UP ABOVE THE OVERCAST SINCE THERE WERE OTHER SHIPS IN THE AREA AND I HAD GONE UNDER ONE AND BARELY MISSED A HOUSE. THE TERRAIN WAS VERY HILLY. I TOOK THE HEADING BACK TO THE SPLASHER. WHEN WE WERE OVER THE SPLASHER, WE TOOK A HEADING OF 90 DEGREES TO SEARCH FOR THE EAST COAST. OVER THE NORTH SEA I MADE MY LET DOWN TO THE TOP OF THE WATER AND SET MY ALTITUDE METER AT ZERO. TO MAKE A 180 DEGREE TURN, I WAS FORCED BACK INTO THE OVERCAST. AFTER COMPLETING THE TURN, I WENT BACK TO THE WATER AND HEADED BACK TOWARD THE EAST COAST.

DURING THIS TIME, I WAS DODGING SMALL SHIPS AND A TARGET ISLAND. AFTER FINDING THE EAST COAST, WE TURNED UP THE COAST TO FIND A FIELD THAT WE KNEW WAS IN THAT VICINITY. CRUISING DOWN THE COAST, THE NAVIGATOR SPOTTED THE FIELD AND I TRIED A 180 DEGREE CLOSE-IN PROCEDURE. DUE TO THE SURFACE WINDS, I WAS BLOWN OFF AND SPENT FIFTEEN MINUTES LOCATING THE FIELD AGAIN. I TRIED TO MAKE CONTACT WITH THE FIELD ON DARKY FREQUENCY 6440 BUT WAS UNABLE TO TRANSMIT TO THEM. THEY TRANSMITTED TO ME GENERAL INFORMATION SUCH AS LENGTH OF RUNWAY (1140 YARDS), CEILING, AND POOR VISIBILITY. I FLEW DOWN THE RUNWAY AND USING HEADINGS AND TIME, MANAGED TO MAKE A FIRST PATTERN. AS I WAS TURNING ON THE APPROACH, I HAD TO FLY AROUND A CAPSIZED DESTROYER BEING UNABLE TO FLY OVER IT AND STAY OUT OF THE OVERCAST. THE ONLY LIGHT ASSISTANCE I HAD WAS AN ALDIS LAMP AND GREEN FLARES. THE ALDIS LAMP WAS BARELY VISIBLE AND THE FLARES BLEW TOO FAR ACROSS THE RUNWAY TO BE OF ANY VALUE. AT THIS TIME, I ESTIMATED VISIBILITY FROM THE COCKPIT TO BE 500 YARDS OR LESS AND I COULD NOT SEE THE RUNWAY IN SUFFICIENT TIME TO LINE UP PROPERLY. TWO TIMES I WENT ON AROUND AFTER LINING UP ON THE RUNWAY TO LAND. ON MY SIXTH TIME, I CAME INTO THE RUNWAY ON A LONG LOW APPROACH OVER THE OLD DESTROYER ON A HEADING OF 220 DEGREES FOR A 250 DEGREE RUNWAY AND WAS ONLY ABLE TO HOLD MYSELF ON A TRUE COURSE WITH THAT HEADING. FLYING AT APPROXIMATELY 20 FEET OVER THE MUD FLATS, I CLEARED AN 8 FOOT OBSTRUCTION AND SET MY AIRCRAFT AS NEAR TO THE END OF THE RUNWAY AS POSSIBLE. DUE TO THE CROSSWIND, I HAD USED OPPOSITE THROTTLES AND BRAKES TO HOLD THE AIRCRAFT ON THE RUNWAY. AS THE RUNWAY WAS SLICK, I WAS NOT ABLE TO SLOW DOWN SUFFICIENTLY TO STOP IN THE LENGTH OF THE RUNWAY. OBSTRUCTIONS ON THE RIGHT PLUS A TORPEDO DUMP ON THE LEFT PREVENTED ME FROM GROUND LOOPING WHILE ON THE

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RUNWAY. AT THE END OF THE RUNWAY, WAS A GRASS AREA THAT WAS SMOOTH AND APPEARED TO LEAD INTO A PLOWED FIELD. WITH THE SPEED I HAD AT THE TIME, THERE WAS LITTLE DANGER OF NOSING OVER BY GOING STRAIGHT AHEAD. AFTER LEAVING THE END OF THE RUNWAY AND HALF WAY ACROSS THE GRASS AREA, I SAW THIS DITCH. I THEN RELEASED MY RIGHT BRAKE, USING FULL LEFT BRAKE AND PIGHT THROTTLE, AND ATTEMPTED AN IMMEDIATE GROUND LOOP. THE SHEER PIN FAILED TO BREAK AND I CALLED FOR THE TAIL WHEEL TO BE UNLOCKED, WHICH WAS, AND MY GROUND LOOP STARTED. THE AIRCRAFT TURNED 90 DEGREES INTO THE WIND AND SLID SIDEMAYS WITHOUT COMPLETING ANY MORE OF THE GROUND LOOP INTO THE DITCH. HAD I NOT TAKEN THIS STEP, AND GONE STRAIGHT INTO THE DITCH, IT IS MY BELIEF THAT THE AIRCRAFT WOULD HAVE BEEN DAMAGED MORE SEVERELY AND AT LEAST FIVE MEMBERS OF THE CREW KILLED. THE APPROACH TO THIS DITCH WAS VERY FLAT AND THE FAR BANK WAS LOWER THAN THE FRONT BANK, MAKING THE DITCH EXTREMELY HARD TO SEE. I SPOTTED THE DITCH FROM THE COCKPIT BEFORE THE NAVIGATOR AND BOMBARDIER SPOTTED IT FROM THE NOSE AND THEY WERE LOOKING STRAIGHT AHEAD. MY GROUND LOOP HAD STARTED BEFORE THEY WERE ABLE TO TELL ME TO GROUND LOOP.

DAMAGE TO THE AIRCRAFT WAS FAIRLY EXTENSIVE. THE FUSELAGE WAS TWISTED FROM THE RADIO ROOM TO THE VERTICAL STABILIZER. RIGHT HORIZONTAL STABILIZER WAS CRUMPLED, RIGHT WING WAS CRUMPLED, AND #3 AND #4 PROPS WERE BENT. THE LEFT WING SHOWED SIGNS OF BEING SPRUNG AT THE FUSELAGE. NEITHER LANDING GEAR WAS BUCKLED AND THE ENGINES AND SUPERCHARGERS WERE UNTOUCHED. FURTHER DAMAGE WAS DONE TO THE AIRCRAFT WHEN THE GEAR WAS RETRACTED BY THE RAF ENGINEERS IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE THE OBSTRUCTION AT THE END OF THE RUNWAY FOR THEIR TAKE OFF. DAMAGE WAS DONE TO THE NOSE SECTION AND FUSELAGE. CONFIDENTIAL AND SECRET MATERIAL WAS GUARDED AT ALL TIMES.

MY TECHNIQUE IN THIS ENTIRE PROCEDURE WAS WITH UTMOST PRECAUTION. LET DOWNS AND LOW FLYING WERE DONE AS PRESCRIBED. ATTEMPTS AT THE FIELD WERE MADE WITH FULL FLAPS, HIGH RPM, AND AIRSPEED OF APPROXIMATELY 110 MPH TO GIVE ME AS MUCH TIME AS POSSIBLE TO LINE UP ON THE RUNWAY. EXTRA PRECAUTION WAS TAKEN BY HAVING THE ENGINEER LOOK OUT OF THE LOW SIDE IN ALL TURNS TO KEEP MY WING FROM TOUCHING THE GROUND. BOTH THE NAVIGATOR AND BOMBARDIER WERE LOOKING OUT OF THE NOSE. THE CO-PILOT WAS PAYING THE STRICTEST ATTENTION TO INSTRUMENTS AS I WAS FLYING AS NEAR CONTACT AS WAS POSSIBLE. THIS FIELD WAS PICKED DUE TO THE FAILURE OF OUR EQUIPMENT AND THE TOTAL LACK OF NAVIGATIONAL FACILITIES. BRIEFED FOR A FRONT MOVING IN AND KNOWING THE WEATHER TO BE GETTING WORSE, IT WAS MY JUDGEMENT TO GET ON THE GROUND AT THIS BASE AND NOT GO UP AND WAIT FOR BETTER WEATHER. RETURN TO THE HOME BASE WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPRACTICAL. WE COULD HAVE OBTAINED A QDM BY W/T BUT PERHAPS COULD NOT HAVE FOUND THE FIELD AND THE TERRAIN WAS SUCH THAT I DID NOT WANT TO GO TO THIS VICINITY.

*James D. Brookshire*

J. D. BROOKSHIRE,  
1st Lt., Pilot.

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STATEMENT BY 2ND LT. E. P. KOUTROUBA, O-836612, CO-PILOT, CONCERNING AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT ON 16 DECEMBER 1944.

AFTER HAVING FOUND THE RAF BASE AT NORTH COATES, MY PILOT CIRCLED THE FIELD FOR LANDING. WE HAD TRIED TO KEEP IN CLOSE CONTACT TO IT BY FLYING AS LOW AS POSSIBLE. I TRIED MAINLY TO CONTACT THE CONTROL TOWER BUT WAS TRANSMITTING VERY WEAKLY. MY RECEPTION WAS LOUD AND CLEAR, AND THE CONTROL TOWER GAVE US THE LANDING INSTRUCTIONS AS MANY TIMES AS WE ATTEMPTED TO GET IN. WE ALSO RECEIVED THE WIND REPORT AND LENGTH OF RUNWAY. FLARES WERE SHOT FREQUENTLY AND COULD JUST BE MADE OUT.

THE PILOT AFTER THE SIXTH ATTEMPT IN LANDING OUR AIRCRAFT, JUST AVOIDED AN EIGHT FOOT OBSTACLE AT THE END OF THE RUNWAY. OUR FLAPS WERE DOWN FULL AND A SECOND BEFORE TOUCHING THE GROUND, THE COWL FLAPS WERE OPENED TO REDUCE OUR RUNNING SPEED. THE PILOT HAD TO USE ALTERNATE BRAKES AND STARBOARD ENGINE TO KEEP ON THE RUNWAY, DUE TO THE 90 DEGREE WIND. AFTER GETTING TO THE END OF THE RUNWAY, WE SAW THE GRASS OVERTHROUGHT, AND RAN STRAIGHT TO IT. HAVING PROCEEDED FURTHER, WE SAW THE DITCH AND IMMEDIATELY STARTED OUR GROUND LOOP WHICH WAS IN VAIN FOR THE MOMENTUM OF THE AIRCRAFT WAS TOO GREAT TO ALLOW A FULL LOOP. A SOONER ATTEMPT AT A GROUND LOOP WOULD HAVE BEEN UNADVISABLE BECAUSE OF THE CLOSE OBSTRUCTIONS TO THE END OF AND ALONG BOTH SIDES OF THE RUNWAY. THE PILOT WAS VERY ALERT AND STARTED THE LOOP AT THE BEST OPPORTUNE MOMENT.

*E. P. Koutrouba*

E. P. KOUTROUBA,  
2nd Lt., Co-pilot.

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STATEMENT BY 2ND LT. H. (NMI) MECHANICK, O-553482, NAVIGATOR, CONCERNING AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT, B-17G 44-8421, ON 16 DECEMBER 1944.

ON TAKE OFF, RADIO COMPASS SWITCHED OFF AUTOMATICALLY DEADENING ALL RECEPTION. WHILE ASSEMBLING, I TRIED TO REMEDY DIFFICULTY BUT COMPASS NEEDLE DID NOT POINT OR GIVE ANY MOVEMENT TO FIELD BUNCHER. MY FINGER HAD TO BE KEPT ON CONTROL BUTTON TO GET ANY RECEPTION AT ALL FOR POWER WOULD GO OFF AUTOMATICALLY. THIS CONTINUED ALL DURING FLIGHT TIME.

GEE BOX RECEPTION WAS EXTREMELY POOR DURING ENTIRE FLIGHT PERIOD. COULD NOT DISTINGUISH ANY SIGNALS AT ALL AFTER 10:30 A.M. BEFORE THIS TIME, I WAS ABLE TO GET THE "A" SIGNAL ONLY GIVING ME SOME IDEA OF MY LATITUDE BUT THE FURTHER NORTH WE'D FLY, THE GREATER THE INTERFERENCE. AFTER APPROXIMATELY 10:30, MY SCREEN WAS FULL OF GRASS WITH ONLY TWO UNIDENTIFIABLE SIGNALS.

WHEN FORMATION PEELED OFF, I FIGURED WE WERE IN THE VICINITY OF SPLASHER #4. I GAVE THE PILOT A TWELVE MINUTE ETA FOR OUR DIVERSION FIELD ON HEADING GIVEN US FOR OUR DIVERSION FIELD OVER WVF. AFTER ETA RAN OUT, WE CIRCLED AT VERY LOW ALTITUDE BUT FAILED TO PICK UP FIELD. WE NARROWLY ESCAPED TWO MID-AIR COLLISIONS.

I SUGGESTED THEN WE RETURN TO SPLASHER #4 AREA AND I WOULD APPLY A LAND FALL ON THE EAST COAST TO FIND A FIELD. WE LEFT THE ISLAND ON A HEADING OF 90 DEGREES ABOVE CLOUD LAYER AT 1,200 FEET. WE CONTINUED FOR TEN MINUTES, DID A 180 DEGREE TURN, DESCENDING TO WITHIN FIFTY FEET ABOVE THE WATER, AND FLEW 270 DEGREES UNTIL WE HIT LAND AGAIN. WE THEN FOLLOWED THE COAST LINE NORTH UNTIL WE HIT THE FIELD I HAD CHOSEN. THE PILOT THEN PROCEEDED TO LAND THE PLANE. ON OUR SIXTH ATTEMPT TO LINE UP THE RUNWAY, THE PILOT GOT THE PLANE DOWN NICELY. I FELT THE BRAKE PRESSURE BEING APPLIED BUT WE COULD ONLY SPURT ON AHEAD. THE END OF THE RUNWAY WAS BUT A FEW HUNDRED YARDS OFF. WE HIT THE END OF THE RUNWAY AND IT LOOKED AS IF WE'D JUST STOP ON THE GRASS. THE PILOT SAW THE DITCH BEFORE THE REST OF THE CREW AND APPLIED FULL LEFT BRAKE AND FULL RIGHT THROTTLE. I YELLED FOR "GROUND LOOP" AND WE JUST SKIDDED ALL THE WAY AROUND. THE NOSE STOPPED ON THIS SIDE WHILE THE TAIL SWUNG AROUND OVER THE DITCH.

*Harold Mechanick*

H. MECHANICK,  
2nd Lt., Navigator.

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HEADQUARTERS  
AAF STATION NO. 106  
Office of the Weather Officer

(P-H-2)

APO 557

21 Dec. 44

SUBJECT: Weather Report for 16 December 1944.

TO : Commanding Officer, 384th Bomb Group, APO 557, U.S.A.  
ATTENTION: Group Operations Officer.

1. The following weather reports are given for North Coates 16 Dec 44:

TIME (GMT plus 1 hr)	VSEY	LOW CLOUD BASE	LOW CLOUD AMT	WEATHER
1000	3 miles	2500 ft	8/10	Haze
1100	No report	.....	.....	.....
1200	2500 yds	2000	5/10	Slight intermittent drizzle.
1300	2500	--	10/10	Drizzle in past hour.
1400	1400	600	5/10	Continuous slight drizzle.
1500*	5-800	500	10/10	Light rain.
1600	800	100	8/10	Slight intermittent drizzle.
		3-600	10/10	

\*Pilot report. Surface wind SE 10-15 mph.

2. The weather in the North Coates' area and also at the other diversion airdromes (Sandtoft and Fiskerton) were much the same as the above.

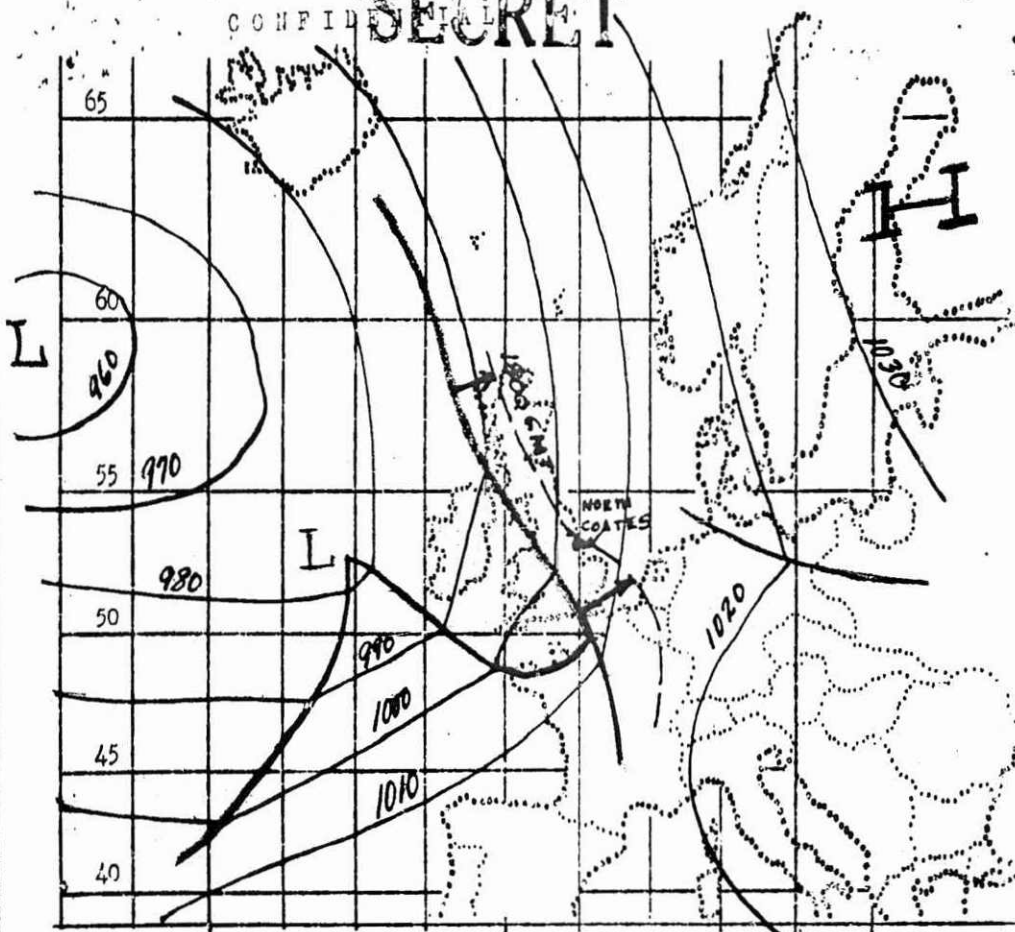
3. Synoptic Situation: An occluded front extended NW to SE west of North Coates (refer to attached map). It was moving eastwards. In the frontal zone which extended over North Coates and the Wash, there was rain, fog or mist, and 10/10 multilayer cloud--10/10 stratocumulus base 1-500 ft tops 3-6000; 10/10 middle base 8-9000 ft top not measured but probably 25-28000 ft.

*Henry G. Horak*  
HENRY G. HORAK  
1st Lieut AC  
Station Weather Officer.

INCLS:  
6 wea maps.

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35 30 25 20 15 10 5 0 5 10 15 20  
Incl 9' 1200 GMT DEC 16, 44

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Meteorological Office,  
R.A.F. Station,  
North Coates,  
Grimsby, Lincs:  
16th. December, 1944.

It is hereby certified that the weather conditions reported  
by this office at about 1345 hrs. BST to-day were as follows:-

Cloud:- 5/10 fractostratus at 600 ft (estimated  
10/10 nimbostratus, base uncertain but  
estimated at 200 ft shortly afterwards.)


Visibility:- (horizontally) 1400 yds.

Surface Wind:- South-east 15 mph.

Weather:- Continuous slight drizzle.

/s/ J. G. COLTIS, F/Lt. .  
Meteorological Officer.

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HARRY W. FIRSTBROOK,  
1st Lt., Air Corps,

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From :- Officer Commanding R.A.F. Station, North Coates.

To :- Officer Commanding, Grafton Underwood.

Date :- 16 December, 1944.

Ref. :- DO/FJR.

REPORT BY OFFICER COMMANDING

R.A.F. NORTH COATES

I witnessed the attempts to land and the final crash of Fortress D 421 at North Coates on 16th December.

I estimate the weather as follows :- Visibility varying from 600 to 1500 yards ( I am certain of the lower figure because when driving down the runway immediately after the crash, I was only just able to see the wreck from the "crossbar" which is 800 yards from the end of the runway )

Cloud I estimate at about 400 feet. Slight Rain

Wind 10-mph. across the runway in use - 2500 M.

2. The runway in use required an approach over the sea and mud flats which are quite featureless. The funnels and lead - in lights were lit, as was the flare path, but they are not of sodium and could not have been easy to see in the prevailing rain and low visibility.

3. The Fortress made six attempts to land before touching down, but was clearly having the greatest difficulty in lining up on the runway.

4. A continuous succession of green very lights were being fired in an attempt to indicate the runway.

5. I have seen the report of my Duty Metereological Officer with which I do not agree. I consider that it paints too optimistic a picture of the actual weather at the time of the crash. This is possibly explained by the "patchiness" of the weather and the rapidity with which it had deteriorated.

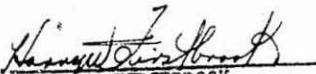
/s/ F. J. B.

Group Captain Commanding.

R.A.F. Station, North Coates.

16th December, 1944.

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

  
HARRY W. FIRSTBROOK,  
1st Lt., Air Corps.

**SECRET**

WAR DEPARTMENT  
**SECRET**  
ARMY AIR FORCES  
**UNSATISFACTORY REPORT**  
(See AAF Reg. 15-54 for information on Proper Use of this Form)

TO BE FILLED IN BY STATION	
STATION SERIAL No. 45-865	DATE SUBMITTED 27 Dec. '44

LEAVE BLANK		
A. C. C. SERIAL No.	REFER TO	06330

STATION U.S.A.A.F. Sta. 106, APO 557		ORGANIZATION 384th. Bombardment Group (H)	
SUBJECT OF REPORT Signal Corps	Property Class—Name	Manufacturer Bendix	AAF Order or Shipping No.
AIRCRAFT—Model & AAF Serial No. B-17-G No. 44821	ENGINE—Model & AAF Serial No.	PART OR ACCESSORY—Type, Model and Serial No. SCR-269-G	
AIRCRAFT REPORTS ONLY LAST D. L. R.—Dept	Hours Since	Days	Flying Time Since Total Flying Time
ENGINE REPORTS ONLY LAST OVERHAUL—Dept	Hours Since	Days and Hours At Each Previous Overhaul	
PART Name Radio Compass, SCR-269-G		Part Drawing, Serial and Specification No.	
Time in Use	Quantity on Hand	Quantity Known Defective 0	No. Previous Failures 0
Manufacturer Bendix		Inspector's No. or Identification	
Indicate by "X" Disposition of Exhibit	Photographed and Prints Enclosed	Held for Instructions	Sent Under Separate Cover
		Sent in Attached Package	Required and Returned to Service
		Disposed of (Explain Below)	To Overhaul Facility (INITIALS)

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

**EXPEDITE**

1. Radio Compass SCR-269-G on above aircraft reported defective immediately after takeoff. This has not been a recurrent trouble and the above U.R. is submitted only to accompany the AAF Form No. 14 submitted on crashed aircraft.
2. The set went off by itself and stayed off until the navigator would hold his control button depressed. This restored partial control of equipment but aural nulls could not be determined on loop position and indicators did not track in normal fashion on compass position.
3. Probable cause of above was malfunction of Relay BK-22-E (assembly drawing No. AN 91154-1) and associated wiring.
4. No definite cause for above is submitted as aircraft crashed at a remote station and has not been available for examination. The above information has been determined solely from the statements of Pilot, Co-pilot and Navigator of the above aircraft.

For the Communications Officer:

*Julius Z. Knapp*  
JULIUS Z. KNAPP,  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Radio Maintenance Officer.

**SECRET**  
ROUTING AND TWO COPIES DIRECT TO COMMANDING GENERAL,  
HQ. AIR SERVICE COMMAND, PATTERSON FIELD, FAIRFIELD, OHIO.

**SECRET**  
**WAR DEPARTMENT**  
**ARMY AIR FORCE**  
**UNSATISFACTORY REPORT**  
(See AAF Reg. 15-64 for information on Proper Use of this Form)

TO BE FILLED IN BY STATION	
STATION SERIAL No.	DATE SUBMITTED

LEAVE BLANK		
A. E. G. SERIAL No.	REFER TO	CLASS

STATION AAF Station No. 106		ORGANIZATION Group Radar					
SUBJECT OF REPORT Property Class-Name Radar Equipment	Manufacturer COSSOR & Co.		AAF Order or Shipping No.				
AIRCRAFT-Model & AAF Serial No. B-17-G 8421		ENGINE-Model & AAF Serial No.		UNIT OR ACCESSORY-Type, Model and Serial No. Type 62 Indicator			
AIRCRAFT REPORTS ONLY LAST P. I. C.-Spot	Hours	Flying Time Since	Total Flying Time				
ENGINE REPORTS ONLY LAST OVERHAUL-Spot	Hours Since	Depots and Hours At Each Previous Overhaul					
Name GGE Mark 11 Equipment		Part Drawing, Serial and Specification No.					
Time in Use	Quantity on Hand	Quantity Known Defective	No. Previous Failures	Manufacturer	Inspector's No. or Identification		
Indicate by "X" Disposition of Exhibit	<input type="checkbox"/> Photographed and Prints Kept	<input type="checkbox"/> Held for Instructions	<input type="checkbox"/> Sent Under Separate Cover	<input type="checkbox"/> Sent in Attached Package	<input checked="" 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:  
(Use Only Applicable Spaces Above-Avoid Unnecessary Repetition.)

**EXPEDITE**

- GEE Mark 11 equipment on above aircraft reported inoperative soon after take-off. The above U.R. is submitted only to accompany the AAF form No. 14 submitted on crashed aircraft.
- The equipment was reported inoperative in so far as the Navigator could obtain only two unidentified signals which could not be used for taking a fix.
- The equipment was removed from the aircraft and set up on the bench for a thorough bench check. The only fault found was that the dividers were slightly off, but as the navigator had not reported this it is concluded that it was caused by the landing. However, if the dividers had been off while the aircraft was in flight, the navigator still would have been able to identify signals. It is concluded that the equipment was satisfactory since signals were seen on the screen, further proven by the fact that the R.F. Unit was found to be on frequency on all stud positions.
- The equipment has since been placed in another operational aircraft and no trouble has been reported.

*Lloyd A. Noffsinger*  
LLOYD A. NOFFSINGER,  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Group Radar Officer.

**SECRET**

Auth. C. J. 8th A.F.

Init. JLN

8 JAN 1945

360.33 1st Wrapper Ind. E-V-4  
Hq, Eighth Air Force, APO 634, c/o Postmaster, New York, N.Y. 8 JAN 1945

TO: Chief, Flying Safety, AAF, Winston-Salem 1, N.C. (6)

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

a. 1st Lt. James D. Brookshire, B-17G number 44-8421.

2. Concur.

For the Commanding General:

*Eurnis Archer*

EURNIS ARCHER

Maj. A.C.D.

Asst. Adj. Gen.

1 Incl:

As above.

**SECRET**







