

**RESTRICTED**

ACCIDENT No. 45-1-20-522

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

78694  
-A 0 0

(1) Place 2 1/2 miles NW of Old Weston (2) Date 20 January 1945 (3) Time 1600  
AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model B-17D (5) A. F. No. 42-97251 (6) Station AAF 106  
Organisation: (7) 8th (8) 38th Bomb (H) (9) 5th Bomb (H)  
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)  
PERSONNEL BH 2357

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	Cook, Raymond D.	P	0-812034	2nd Lt	18	AC	8th	None	Yes
CP	Leavitt, Phillip M.	P	0-2062233	2nd Lt	18	AC	8th	None	Yes
W	Walker, Roy E.	N	T-131911	T/O	17	AC	8th	None	Yes
S	Nickander, Wallace H.	B	0-783806	2nd Lt	18	AC	8th	None	Yes
CR	Lee, Van (NMI)		39288335	T/Sgt	38	AC	8th	None	Yes
TT	Head, Robert L.		18128187	T/Sgt	38	AC	8th	None	Yes
BT	Kangas, James K.		36887639	Sgt	38	AC	8th	None	Yes
TO	Krupczyk, Howard C.		36888634	Sgt	38	AC	8th	Minor	Yes
FO	Green, Forest R.		16177151	Sgt	38	AC	8th	Minor	Yes

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED OR CHANGED  
TO **RESTRICTED**  
BY AUTHORITY OF C.G.A.A.F.

(20) Cook, Raymond D. (21) 0-812034 (22) 2nd Lt (23) 18 (24) AC  
(Last name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Serial number) (Rank) (Personal class) (Branch)  
Assigned (25) 8th (26) 38th Bomb (27) 5th Bomb (H) (28) AAF 106  
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)  
Attached for flying (29) 8th (30) 38th Bomb (31) 5th Bomb (H) (32) AAF 106  
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)  
Original rating (33) Pilot (34) 3 Nov 43 Present rating (35) Pilot (36) 21/13 Instrument rating (37) 9 Dec 44  
(Rating) (Date) (Rating) (Date) (Date) (Date)

FIRST PILOT HOURS:  
(at the time of this accident)  
(38) This type B-17 516:10 (42) Instrument time last 6 months 47:50  
(39) This model B-17D 347:00 (43) Instrument time last 30 days 3:20  
(40) Last 90 days 140:45 (44) Night time last 6 months 37:15  
(41) Total 520:40 (45) Night time last 30 days 0:00

props - 2 AIRCRAFT DAMAGE NF

DAMAGE	(49) LIST OF DAMAGE
(46) Aircraft <u>A</u>	<u>Complete destruction</u>
(47) Engine(s) <u>4</u>	
(48) Propeller(s) <u>4</u>	



(50) Weather at the time of accident obscured; visibility 200 yards in snow  
(51) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident Yes.  
(52) Cleared from AAF Sta 106 (53) To Combat (54) Kind of clearance Operational  
(55) Pilot's mission Operational

(56) Nature of accident Air speed indicator malfunctioned while flying on instruments. Pilot believed the aircraft was load to the extent it would no longer be possible for him to fly and ordered crew to bail out.  
(57) Cause of accident Pilot inexperienced in flying in icing conditions with air speed indicator malfunctioning and lost confidence in his ability to keep aircraft under control.

(58) Has Form 54 been submitted? No.  
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## DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

The aircraft was returning from an operational mission and was part of a formation returning to home base. They encountered severe weather conditions a short while before arriving at base, and when they did arrive they were flying at 800 feet in a heavy snow storm. The formation was diverted to another field where better weather conditions existed and the formation leader attempted to climb to get his group out of the snow and icing conditions that prevailed at lower altitude. While climbing, the visibility became so bad that the pilot was unable to maintain visual contact with the formation and Lt. Cook changed his heading to avoid the possibility of a mid-air collision. Lt. Cook had turned on his pitot heat before getting into the inclement weather, and he encountered no trouble with the instruments until he reached the altitude of about 5,000 feet where their airspeed dropped to 120 MPH and they were descending 500 feet per minute. At 3,500 feet Lt. Cook decided he could no longer fly the aircraft and gave his crew instructions to bail out. At this time, Lt. Cook was using 2,500 RPM's and 46 inches of manifold pressure. He had been using 38 inches and 2,300 RPM's and, when he made the power setting change, the No. 3 engine ran away. He attempted to get the propeller under control but was unsuccessful. He put the aircraft on AFCE and tried to maintain flight by lowering flaps. About this time Lt. Cook was convinced that he could no longer fly the aircraft, so he bailed out himself.

When the crew was interrogated by the accident board, it was learned that they had encountered only light ice. Rime ice had built up to less than 3/4 inches thick on the leading edges of the wings. The propellers had been throwing no ice at all at the time they left the aircraft. It is believed at the power settings employed, had the icing conditions been severe, the propellers would have thrown ice without the aid of de-icer fluid. (De-icer fluid is never carried on combat missions because of its inflammable and explosive nature.)

Neither the pilot or co-pilot reported the air speed indicator dropping to zero at any time; however, the airspeed indicator did fluctuate considerably on occasions, dropping to indications as low as 80 MPH. The pilot reported that on several occasions he was descending at 2,000 feet per minute and that his airspeed would not go above 120 MPH. At no time was he able to get it above 150 MPH.

Questioning the pilot on the characteristics of the aircraft during these times of rapid descent, it was learned that he had to use considerable forward pressure against the control column. This was a definite indication to the board that there was water or ice of some form in the pitot and for this reason the airspeed was malfunctioning. The pilot reported during this time that there was no sign of any malfunctioning on the part of the other instruments. His altimeter registered the changes in altitude in accordance with the attitude of the aircraft, and his rate of climb was functioning.

It is the opinion of this board that the pilot was 100% responsible for this accident. It is apparent that the pilot did not feel confident to fly his aircraft under the conditions that existed. It is further believed that a more experienced pilot, or even a pilot of the same experience level as Lt. Cook, if thoroughly indoctrinated in the fundamentals of instrument flying would have saved the aircraft. This opinion is further substantiated by the fact that none of the other aircraft in the formation that day, with the possible exception of one, had reported having any undue amount of trouble in the handling of their aircraft.

It is recommended that all pilots be given, during their training, a certain amount of instrument flight training with their air speed indicators covered. The mistakes made by this pilot will be brought to the attention of all pilots of this Group.

*Robert E. Tracer*  
ROBERT E. TRACER, Lt. Col., Air Corps.

*George H. Lumsden, Jr.*  
GEORGE H. LUMSDEN, JR., Lt. Col., Air Corps.

*Arthur E. Bean*  
ARTHUR E. BEAN, Major, Air Corps.

Date 28 January 1945.

The following ex-officio attended the board meeting:

JOHN M. PALMER,  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Station S-4.

HENRY H. STROUD,  
MAJOR, Medical Corps,  
Flight Surgeon.

HENRY G. HORAK,  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Weather Officer.

JAMES W. LOTER,  
1st Lt, Air Corps,  
Flying Control Officer.

CONFIDENTIAL

24 January, 1945.

STATEMENT BY 2ND LT RAYMOND D. COOK, 0812034, CONCERNING AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT OF B-17G, #42-97251, 20 JANUARY, 1945.

On January 20, 1945 I flew pilot on aircraft 7251 - Luggage "O". We flew Low Squadron Deputy. We completed the mission and while enroute encountered considerable weather. We arrived back at the base (G.U.) in formation at 800 ft. We were in a heavy snow storm and the formation started to climb; we stayed in formation until it became impossible to see any ships. We then tried to climb out on a heading of 320.

Our wings were icing up and we were in bad air currents for a time. Our air speed began to drop in order to hold altitude. The pilot heat was on at all times in the storm. At sight of the ice I turned on the prop. anti-icing fluid; but there was no fluid in the tanks.

When the air speed reached 120 miles per hour and we were preparing to lose about 500 ft. per minute. At about 4000 ft I told the crew to bail out. The visibility was zero and the plane felt very mushy. I received word that all were preparing to bail out. At this time we had 2500 R.P.M. and turbos full on. At 3500 ft. I gave the order to bail out. I clutched in the auto pilot. In flying instruments I used a combination of all my working instruments. The existing conditions in so far as I was concerned showed no indications that any of the instruments were not working. At this time #3 prop ran away. I attempted to get it under control; but could do nothing with it. At this time all the crew were gone from the ship. I started to lower some flap, as I climbed out of the cockpit. I left the ship from the nose hatch. We had about 500 gallons of gas. It was about 1600 hours when we jumped. Tail turret gunner and waist gunner received broken ankles upon landing. We landed within a mile and a half of each other, about 1 mile from Tur Langton.

*Raymond D. Cook*

RAYMOND D. COOK,  
2nd Lt, Air Corps,  
0812034, Pilot.

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STATEMENT BY 2ND LT. PHILIP N. LEAVITT, O-2062231, CONCERNING AIRCRAFT  
ACCIDENT OF B-17G, #42-97251, ON 20 JANUARY, 1945.

Upon returning to the home field on 20 January, 1945, with what was left of the low squadron, we were flying at about 800-1000 feet altitude when we ran into a heavy snowstorm. The snow and visibility grew steadily worse. A moment after passing the field, flying on the lead aircraft became impossible and we turned right to a heading of 320 degrees attempting to gain altitude. There were indications of both rime and clear ice forming. The altimeter was set at the given QFE, the pitot heat was on; prop anti-icing fluid was on, but did not appear to be operating.

At an altitude of something <sup>OVER</sup> 4000 and below 4500 feet, the aircraft began acting very strangely trying to stall out. An I.A.S. of 150 could only be maintained by pushing forward on the stick. The altimeter began to drop regardless of air speed at a rate of between 500-1500 feet per minute. There were strong upward and downward air currents.

We immediately put the RPM and manifold pressure in full take-off power position -- 2500 RPM and about 46" of Hg. It made no noticeable difference in the stability of the aircraft. By this time the pilot and I were together on the controls, attempting to hold somewhat level flight. The pilot had given the order to prepare to bail out and received acknowledgement. The air speed continued to drop, #3 prop fan away and was uncontrollable; the air speed read 80 MPH and our altitude was about 3400 feet when the pilot gave the order to bail out.

We put the aircraft on C-1, turned manifold pressure control full on, to "10". We bailed out the hatch with the bombardier and navigator. Our altitude was about 2500 feet when I bailed out (when I climbed out of the cockpit).

The gas gauges, in which I kept a close check, read a total of about 600 gallons. We destroyed no equipment. There was no indication of carburetor ice; the props appeared to be icing.

All of the crew landed within an area of less than a square mile. There was no difficulty in leaving the aircraft. These two facts would tend to indicate that the air speed <sup>was</sup> not have been excessively great.

*Philip N. Leavitt*  
PHILIP N. LEAVITT,  
2nd Lt., Air Corps,  
Co-Pilot.

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