

RESTRICTED

ACCIDENT No.

WAR DEPARTMENT

U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

RESTRICTED

45-3-19-521

87 0

(1) Place Reigate Hill - 51° 14' N - 00° 21' W (2) Date 19 March 1945 (3) Time 1740

AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model B-17G (5) A. F. No. 13-29035 (6) Station 106

Organization: (7) 8th AF (8) 38th Bomb (H) (9) 547th Bomb Sq. (H)

(Command and Air Force)

(Group)

(Squadron)

PERSONNEL

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	Griffin, Robert S.	P	0-779851	2nd Lt.	18	AC	8th	Fatal	None
CP	Geller, Herbert S.	P	0-2062494	2nd Lt.	18	AC	8th	Fatal	None
	Runyan, Royal A.	N	0-806551	2nd Lt.	18	AC	8th	Fatal	None
TOG	Jeffrey, Donald W.		35900479	Sgt.	38	AC	8th	Fatal	None
RO	Phillips, Philip J.		12225719	Sgt.	38	AC	8th	Fatal	None
DE	Marshall, Robert E.		16116799	Sgt.	38	AC	8th	Fatal	None
BT	Irons, William R.		6874192	Sgt.	20	AC	8th	Fatal	None
EC	Hickey, Thomas J.		12032033	Sgt.	38	AC	8th	Fatal	None
TG	Manbeck, Robert F.		37202047	S/Sgt.	38	AC	8th	Fatal	None

PILOT'S RECORD

(20) Griffin, Robert S. (21) 0-779851 (22) 2nd Lt. (23) 18 (24) AC

(Last name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Serial number) (Rank) (Personnel class) (Branch)

Assigned (25) 8th (26) 38th Bomb (H) (27) 547th Bomb (H) (28) 106

(Command and Air Force)

(Group)

(Squadron)

(Station)

Attached for flying (29) None (30) None (31) None (32) None

(Command and Air Force)

(Group)

(Squadron)

(Station)

Original rating (33) Pilot (34) 23/5/44 Present rating (35) Pilot (36) 23/5/44 Instrument rating (37) 13/2/45

(Rating)

(Date)

(Rating)

(Date)

(Date)

FIRST PILOT HOURS:

(at the time of this accident)

(38) This type 313:55 (42) Instrument time last 6 months 14:45
 (39) This model 285:35 (43) Instrument time last 30 days 2:30
 (40) Last 90 days 160:45 (44) Night time last 6 months 63:40
 (41) Total 313:55 (45) Night time last 30 days 8:50

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

DAMAGE	(46) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(46) Aircraft <u>W</u>	Complete wreck
(47) Engine(s) <u>W</u>	
(48) Propeller(s) <u>W</u>	

(50) Weather at the time of accident 8/10ths clouds, base 300 feet, 10/10th clouds, base 300 feet; drizzle, visibility 2500 to 3000 yards; wind WSW 15-20 MPH.

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

(52) Cleared from AAF Station 106 (53) To Operational

Clearance reference: Operational

(54) Pilot's mission Operational TO **RESTRICTED**

BY AUTHORITY OF CGA-5

(55) Nature of accident Collision in full flight with hill. BY J.E.C. DATE 1-14-46

(57) Cause of accident Pilot error.

(58) Has Form 51 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 a combat mission over the continent. The weather was a contributing factor, as ceilings were generally low over the entire area. It appears obvious that the pilot had decided to try to stay under the overcast. He had left the formation, as a result of weather, and had completed no radio contacts with the ground prior to the accident. The terrain over which he had been flying just before the crash was such that he probably had an average clearance of 200 feet. Reigate Hill, into which the aircraft crashed, was partly shrouded in clouds making it invisible to the pilot. Observers in the town of Reigate stated that they saw the aircraft flying very low and headed directly into the hill, and that shortly before it crashed it disappeared from their view into the clouds. Drizzle on the pilots' windshield undoubtedly cut down clear, forward visibility to practically zero. The weather given in item #50 of this report was observed at Red Hill airdrome, an R.A.F. station, the elevation of which is 3-400 feet lower than the hill. The aircraft flew directly over this airdrome.

Evidence showed that the aircraft hit the trees with wings level, and possibly in a slight climb. There was no evidence of mechanical failure, no props were feathered, wheels were up, flaps were up and automatic pilot was "OFF". No evidence was obtainable from controls, instruments, switches, etc. Part of the wreckage burned, but fires were extinguished by the Reigate Fire Department within a few minutes after the crash.

It is the opinion of this Accident Board that this type of accident can be avoided only through exercise of better judgement and headwork by the pilots concerned. However, it is believed that one recommendation is indicated: That pilots make use of "altimeter setting" (QFF) instead of "zero-setting pressure" (QFE) when returning from missions, and reset their altimeters frequently according to information received from weather stations in the area. This would provide a visual, ready reference to true altitude above sea level, which obviated the necessity of any mathematical calculations to determine altitude above the terrain. It is not suggested that this factor had any bearing on the accident in question.

Responsibility: 100% pilot error.



Signature

Philip Y. Williams
PHILIP Y. WILLIAMS, Maj., AC.
(Investigating Officer)

T. D. Hutchinson
T. D. HUTCHINSON, Maj., AC.

M. Hansen
M. HANSEN, Maj., AC.

19 March 1945

106

384 (H)

B-17G

DATE

STATION

GROUP NO. AND TYPE

AIRPLANE MODEL

M/SGT CARL WILLIAMS

547 (H)

43-39035

CREW CHIEF OR AERIAL ENGINEER

SQUADRON NO. AND TYPE

AIRPLANE SERIAL NO.

PERS. CLASS	— PRINT PLAINLY — NAME — RANK — 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 OR I	DUTY	N OR I	DUTY	N OR I
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
18	547 GRIFFIN, ROBERT S., 2ND LT. O-779854	179	P				FROM:	07 : 30
18	547 GELLER, HERBERT S., 2ND LT. O-2062494	179	CP				TO:	
18	547 RUNYON, ROYAL A., 2ND LT. O-860554	179	N				MISSION:	NO. OF LANDINGS
38	547 MARSHALL, ROBERT F., SGT. 16116799	179	E				FROM:	
38	547 PHILLIPS, PHILIP J. JR., SGT. 12225719	179	R				TO:	
38	547 JEFFREY, DONALD W., SGT. 35900479	179	TOG				MISSION:	NO. OF LANDINGS
38	547 MANBECK, ROBERT F., S/SGT. 37202047	179	G				FROM:	
38	547 HICKEY, THOMAS J., SGT., 12032033	179	G				TO:	
20	547 IRONS, WILLIAM R., SGT., 6874192	179	G				MISSION:	NO. OF LANDINGS
							FROM:	
							TO:	
							MISSION:	NO. OF LANDINGS
							FROM:	
							TO:	
							MISSION:	NO. OF LANDINGS

"CERTIFIED TRUE COPY"

John K. Shelley
JOHN K. SHELLEY
Captain, Air Corps,
Operations Officer

WAR DEPARTMENT
A. A. F.
FORM NO. 1
TENTATIVE-12-18-41

FLIGHT REPORT - OPERATIONS

CHECKED:
LEGIBLE AND
CORRECT

R
OPER.
CLERK

TRANSCRIBED:
TOTAL FLIGHT
TIME ENTERED
ON FORM 1A

W
CREW
CHIEF

TOTAL
FLIGHT
TIME

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1943. NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y.

CONFIDENTIAL

AIRPLANE FLIGHT REPORT - ENGINEERING

INSPECTION STATUS				SERVICING AT STATION OF TAKE-OFF (CHECK IMMEDIATELY BEFORE TAKE-OFF)												
DATE OF OR HOURS DUE	BY	INSPECTED TODAY		SERVICE	FUEL (GALLONS)		OIL (QUARTS)								RADIATOR CHECKED	
		NO. 1	NO. 2		NO. 3	NO. 4	NO. 5	NO. 6	NO. 7	NO. 8	NO. 9	NO. 10				
PREFLIGHT	W	WILLIAMS			SERV. ICED	IN TANKS	SERV. ICED	IN TANKS	SERV. ICED	IN TANKS	SERV. ICED	IN TANKS	SERV. ICED	IN TANKS	SERV. ICED	IN TANKS
DAILY																
25 HOURS	259:40	106		1ST	2500	140	140	140	140	140						
50 HOURS	284:40			2ND	2002	2700										
100 HOURS	268:55			3RD												
				4TH												
				5TH												

INSPECTION OF AUXILIARY EQUIPMENT				STATUS TODAY		EXPLANATION
EQUIPMENT	SYMBOL	INSPECTED BY	STATION	1.	2.	
BOMBARDMENT	M	MAC CRIMMON				Bombardier's fluorescent light removed.
GUNNERY	////					
RADAR	B	HIGBY	106			
COMMUNICATIONS						
PHOTOGRAPHIC						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.
NAVIGATION						
TURRETS	W	WELCH				

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	NO. 5
HOURS TO DATE	234:40	234:40	234:40	234:40	234:40
HOURS TODAY					
TOTAL					
OIL CHANGE DUE	EC	EC	EC	EC	EC
CUNO. CLEANING DUE	259:40	259:40	259:40	259:40	259:40
HOURS TO DATE	234:40				
HOURS TODAY					
TOTAL					

RELEASED FOR FLIGHT { R. S. Griffin

REMARKS: PILOTS AND MECHANICS - SEE INSTRUCTIONS INSIDE FRONT COVER.

GUNS OUT - 10 X 500 G.P. HIGHEST MP "H"

Loaded Cpl MacCrimmon CONCURRENT MP

ALTITUDE

HRS MIN

A TRUE COPY:

Thomas P. Davis
THOMAS P. DAVIS,
Capt, Air Corps,
Group Eng. Officer.

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DATE	AIRCRAFT ORG. DATA	AIRCRAFT DATA	ENGINE DATA	
19-3-45	AIR FORCE VIII	COMPONENT	ENGINE MODEL R-1820-97	
STATION 106	COMD., SERV. COMD. OR DEPT 1st Div.	Bomber (H)	SERIAL NO. SW-028963	SERIAL NO. SW-029129
CREW CHIEF OR ENGINEER M/Sgt C.A. Williams	GROUP NO. & TYPE 384th Bomb Gp (H)	AIRCRAFT MODEL B-17G	SERIAL NO. SW-029099	SERIAL NO. SW-029003
	SQUADRON NO. & TYPE 547th Bomb Sq	AIRCRAFT SERIAL NO. 43-39035	TOTAL FLIGHT TIME → :	

~~SECRET~~
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
HEADQUARTERS

D-J-6

AAF STATION NO. 106
Office of the Intelligence Officer

APC 557,
23 March 1945.

SUBJECT: Aircraft Accident Report of B-17G 43-39035, 547th Bombardment Squadron,
384th Bombardment Group (H), AAF Station No. 106, APC 557, 19 March 1945.

TO : Commanding General, Headquarters, First Air Division, APC 557, U. S.
Army.

1. The following report on the above subject is hereby submitted:

FACTS: Aircraft Number 43-39035 of the 547th Bombardment Squadron, 384th Bombardment Group (H), AAF Station No. 106, APC 557, piloted by 2nd Lt. Robert S. Griffin, O-779854, 547th Bombardment Squadron, 384th Bombardment Group (H), APC 557, AAF Station 106, was returning from an operational mission over enemy territory on 19 March 1945. The weather over England was approximately 8/10ths to 10/10ths with ceiling of approximately 300 feet. Lt. Griffin had left the formation as had other aircraft of the Group in order to prevent accidents and had gone down under the cloud coverage to facilitate his getting back to his base. The terrain over which Lt. Griffin was flying at the time of the accident was such that he probably had an average clearance of 200 feet. Aircraft Number 43-39035 crashed into Reigate Hill, Surrey, England at approximately 1740 hours, which hill was partially shrouded in clouds making it invisible to the Pilot. The aircraft was a total loss and all occupants of the same were instantly killed. There were nine men in the aircraft at the time of the accident.

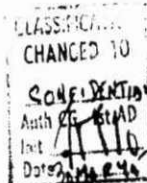
FINDINGS: It is the opinion of this Officer from the evidence obtained by the investigation officer, Major P. Y. Williams, O-417728, at the scene of the accident and from the position of the instruments and the controls at the time of the impact that the accident was due solely to the error of the Pilot, 2nd Lt. Robert S. Griffin, O-779854, and that there was no evidence of sabotage to be pursued in this case.

Alexander L. Janes
ALEXANDER L. JAMES
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Intelligence Officer Member.

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HEADQUARTERS
AAF STATION NO. 106
Office of the Station Commander



APO 557,
26 March, 1945.

SUBJECT: Transmittal of AAF Form 14

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

Transmitted herewith is AAF Form 14 and allied papers on aircraft accident near Reigate Hill on 19 March, 1945.

For the Station Commander:



Harold Nelson, Jr.
HAROLD NELSON, JR.,
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

- 5 Incls:
Incl 1 - AAF Form 14 (in quad).
Incl 2 - AAF Form 1 (in quad).
Incl 3 - AAF Form 1A (in quad).
Incl 4 - S-2 O. Report (in quad).
Incl 5 - 8 photos (4 prints each).

360.33 1st Ind. (E/R/4)
HEADQUARTERS 1ST AIR DIVISION, APO 557, 30 March 1945.

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

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

For the Commanding General:



Harry H. Hance
HARRY H. HANCE
Major, AGD
Asst Adjutant General

5 Incls: n/c (trip).

-1-

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Incl #3



(GAD-384/111-6)(20 Mar 45)(NC 43-39035 B-176)



GAD-384/III-3X20 Mor 45XV6 150053 8476



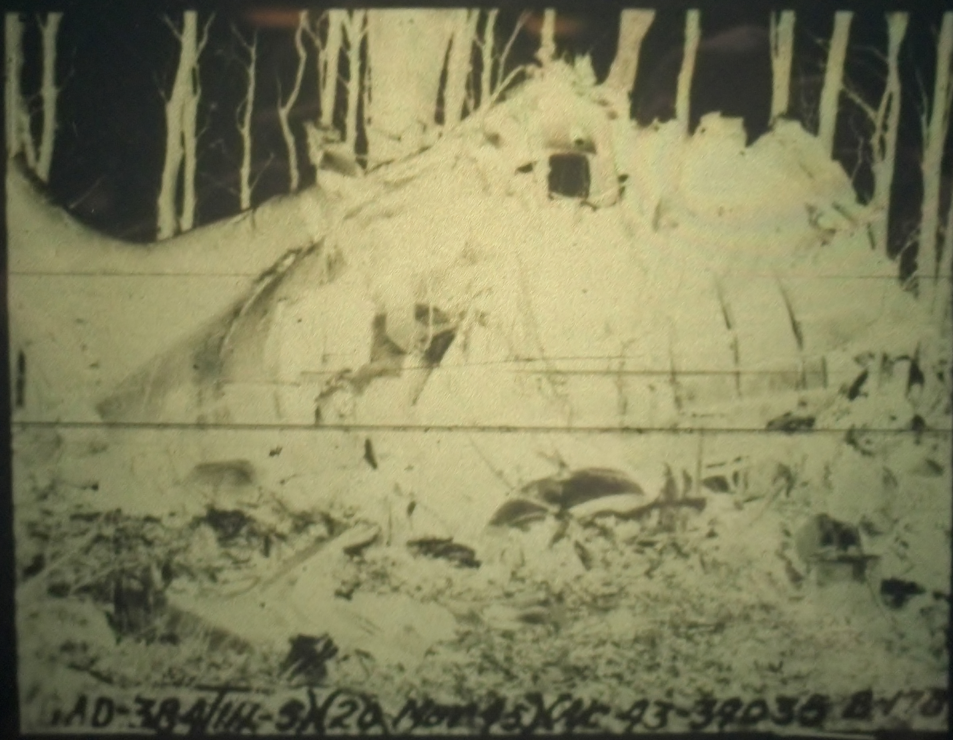
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(GAD-384/M 33-39035 B-17C



AD-384114-3X20 MON 45X14 93-38035 B-170



AD-504/M-7X20 Mar 43 NC 43-39035 B 116



6810-384/111-4(20-110) 45X4C 43-39035-847