

**REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT**

ACCIDENT No. 45-6-11-526

**REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT**

**61 4**

7-64  
1-360

(1) Place Guernsey Island (2) Date 11 June, 1945 (3) Time 1640  
 AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model B-17G (5) A. F. No. 43-37971 (6) Station 106  
 Organization: (7) 8th Air Force (8) 38th Bomb (H) (9) 545th Bomb (H)  
 (Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) 2354

PERSONNEL 617

DOVT	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	Sheehan, Robert E.	P	0-832066	2nd Lt.	18	AC	8th AF	None	None
CP	Strong, George V., Jr.	P	0-834685	2nd Lt.	18	AC	8th AF	None	None
N	Logie, Loren C.	N	T-136427	F/O	17	AC	8th AF	None	None
R	Amarati, Henry I.		12019662	Sgt.	38	AC	8th AF	None	None
E	Sarabian, Charles (NMI)		19126702	Sgt.	38	AC	8th AF	None	None
X	Yarbrough, James L.		31828485	Sgt.	38	AC	8th AF	None	None
X	Laray, Gordon H.		19022808	Sgt.	38	AC	8th AF	None	None
X	Putt, John F.		33188164	Cpl.	38	AC	8th AF	None	None

**PILOT-CHECKED DATA SUMMARY**

(20) Sheehan Robert E. (21) 0-832066 (22) 2nd Lt. (23) 18 (24) AC  
 (Last name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Serial number) (Rank) (Personal class) (Branch)  
 Assigned (25) 8th Air Force (26) 38th Bomb (H) (27) 545 Bomb (H) (28) 106  
 (Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)  
 Attached for flying (29) Same (30) Same (31) Same (32) 2354  
 (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) 27/1/45  
 (Rating) (Date) (Rating) (Date) (Date) (Date)

First Pilot Hours:  
 (at the time of this accident) T.O. - 1 **F**

(38) This type	<u>254.00</u>	(42) Instrument time last 6 months	<u>51.45</u>
(39) This model	<u>204.15</u>	(43) Instrument time last 30 days	<u>15.45</u>
(40) Last 90 days	<u>127.50</u>	(44) Night time last 6 months	<u>12.10</u>
(41) Total	<u>285.50</u>	(45) Night time last 30 days	<u>5.00</u>

**OR - AIRCRAFT DAMAGE PROP -**

DAMAGE	(46) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(46) Aircraft	Salvage
(47) Engine(s)	
(48) Propeller(s)	

(49) Weather at the time of accident Five tenths at one hundred (100) feet, one tenth at two hundred (200) feet, ten tenths medium clouds. Visibility fifteen hundred (1500) yards. Wind SSW approximately eleven (11) miles per hour. **VM**  
 (50) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident No.  
 (51) Cleared from Yal7 (52) To Station 106 (53) Kind of clearance Instrument **2**  
 (54) Pilot's mission Return trip from routine flight on Green Project. **A**  
 (55) Nature of accident Landing accident. **IV-J**

(56) Cause of accident Short grass runway one thousand (1,000) yards and poor weather conditions. **11 13 14 21 20**  
 (57) Has Form 51 been submitted? No.

**REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT**

9-105

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FOLLOWING IS THE STATEMENT OF THE AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT BY THE LIEUTENANT ROBERT E. SHEAHAN, ASN O-832066, ON 11 JUNE 1945 IN AIRCRAFT B-17G A3-37971

Departed Marseilles at about 1215 and proceeded on course flying at 6500 feet above scattered cumulus clouds. The last pilotage check point which was seen was Rouen, France. Shortly after leaving Rouen, we encountered an undercast cloud condition. We continued on a course of 330° for about a half hour and because we found that all of our other navigational aids were out, decided to tune to the BBC and get a BC - heading approximately to London. Apparently this gave us a false bearing because after going past our ETA for London for several minutes the needle was still pointing straight up. When we decided to follow the BC, we had to turn quite a bit to the left to center it. This brought us up into west England where the weather was very bad and due to the fact that we only had about two hours supply of gas, and that we couldn't get a base weather report and also that there was a complete overcast for many miles ahead we decided to go back and try to get into a field in France where we knew it was clear.

We tried to get darky and also to get a VHF/DF QRM but we apparently were not heard. We headed back to the continent on a bearing of 170° and after flying on this heading for about 40 minutes or so ( EFM 1600<sup>h</sup>-Hg 26 airspeed 150). I saw a break in the clouds and went down to try and get under it and finally did so at about 50 to 100 ft over the water. We saw land and flew over to investigate it. After circling for some time, we found it was an island, and it was about this time that the radio station started to call us on 6440. They informed us it was Guernsey Island and we asked if they had a landing strip there. They replied in the affirmative and also directed us to it. Our gas was very low at this time so I decided to put it down there rather than risk trying to get to another more desirable field. They told me to come in East to West, but due to zero, zero conditions on the East approach to the runway, I told them I was going to come in down wind. After making two passes due to low altitude of the pattern, we came in West to East and landed.

I brought it in at about 105 MPH. We landed short in the first third of the runway and even though I was practically standing on the brakes, the aircraft would not slow down appreciably due to the grass runway. As we passed the end of the runway, I told the Co-Pilot to unlock the tail wheel and gave it full power on one side. We turned about 110° or so to the right and stopped. No one was hurt and the RAF personnel put out a slight fire which started in the # four engine.

Robert E. Sheahan  
ROBERT E. SHEAHAN,  
2nd Lt., Air Corps,  
Pilot  
545th Bomb Squadron  
384th Bomb Group

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FOLLOWING IS THE STATEMENT OF THE AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT BY 2ND LT. GEORGE V. STRONG, ASN O-834685, ON 11 JUNE 1945, IN AIRCRAFT B-17 G 43-37971

After departing from Istres at 1210, we climbed to an altitude of 6500 ft above the lower scattered cumulus clouds, and proceeded on course to our destination of Grafton Underwood. The last pilotage check point we spotted was Rouen, as soon after the cloud coverage became a solid overcast.

We proceeded on a course of  $330^{\circ}$ , and the pilot instructed the radio operator to get a base weather report and a QDM. The navigator tuned in BBC and instructed me to home into the station; to do so I had to turn several degrees to the left. Soon afterwards, I was informed by the navigator that our ETA for London had expired, and that he was uncertain of our position. I immediately commenced to transmit to Darcy on 6440 KC and I attempted to obtain a QDM on all channels, "A", "B", "C" and "D" of VHF. I had no success whatsoever.

The pilot and navigator then decided to return to France and land. To conserve gas we reduced our power settings to 1600 RPM and 26" of mercury. We spotted a hole in the clouds after flying for some minutes on a heading of  $170^{\circ}$ . We let down through the hole and continued our heading of  $170^{\circ}$ , at an altitude of 100 ft above the channel. After a few minutes we spotted what turned out to be the Island of Guernsey. I called Darcy on 6440 KC, and was answered immediately that it was the Island of Guernsey. I asked if they had a landing runway and they answered that they had one grass runway of 1000 yards, running East and West, and that the landing direction was to the West with a wind 24 MPH from the West.

The pilot decided to land there rather than risk returning to France, since our fuel supply was running low. The base of the overcast above the island was from 400 to 500 ft. The pilot attempted to land into the West, but found zero, zero weather conditions at the East end of the runway. He then immediately decided to land downwind into the East and proceeded to do so. Due to such a strong tail wind and a grass runway, the brakes would not hold. The pilot ground looped the aircraft.

*George V. Strong, Jr.*  
GEORGE V. STRONG,  
2nd Lt., Air Corps  
Co-Pilot  
545th Bomb Squadron  
384th Bomb Group

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FOLLOWING IS THE STATEMENT OF THE AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT BY F/O LOREN C. LOGIE,  
ASN T-136427, ON 11 JUNE 1945 IN AIRCRAFT B-17G 43-37971

We departed from Marseille at 1210. We got off course about 10 mi to the left but corrected to the right and then we paralleled course to Rouen, France. Over last check point I gave a DR heading to London of 330°. As a check on my DR, I tuned in on BBC, this took us off our DR heading several degrees to the left. When my ETA for London was up, I decided that we were getting a false bearing. At the French Coast the Radio Operator was instructed to get a base weather report and also a QDM, he was unable to get either. We also tried to get a Darcy Station on a VHF/DF Station, but were unable to get either. As the storm looked quite bad to the north and we had only two hours of gas, I advised the Pilot to return to the continent.

We then took up a heading of 170°. After flying this heading for approximately 40 minutes, we spotted a break in the clouds and got under them. We spotted some land which proved to be island. We contacted them on the radio and they informed us it was Gurnsey, they also informed us that they had an airstrip. The pilot decided to land.

*Loren C. Logie*  
LOREN C. LOGIE,  
F/O Air Corps,  
Navigator  
545th Bomb Squadron  
384th Bomb Group

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FOLLOWING IS THE STATEMENT OF THE AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT BY SGT HENRY I. AMORATI,  
ASN 42019662, ON 11 JUNE 1945, IN AIRCRAFT B-17G # 43-37971.

Departed from Marseilles, France, approximately 1215, flying normal course, On the way back at an altitude of approximately 6500 feet, the weather socked in, and upon reaching the coast of France it was so bad that I was instructed by the Pilot to get a weather report. At this time I tuned into our base station (3DH) but was unable to hear it. My XMR was tuned to 4790 KC which I used the Freq Meter to get, as nothing was coming thru the receiver. My only concern now was to get weather and I kept calling as sometimes we fly thru skip zones. I also heard other aircraft calling 3 DH for weather but was unable to hear any replies. By listening to other aircraft call 3 DH for weather is another method used to obtain weather reports.

At this time the Navigator informed me that we were low on gas and that I should call for a QDM. To save time I immediately called 3 DH once more and continued, thinking I would hear them but I was still unable to get anything over the receiver. When I saw we were flying low and I was told there was only approximately 2 hours of gas, I tried to contact other stations located near our base, but I was still unable to hear anything over the receiver. Time was running short and I could not try anything else as I would lose time by changing from one station to another, so continued just hoping that I might get something.

Instructors from Radio Dept say that our only requirements are to get weather when necessary. Radio navigational aids for France and England have been collected therefore our only contact station is the base 3DH.

*Henry I. Amorati*  
HENRY I. AMORATI,  
S/Sgt., Air Corps,  
Radio Operator  
545th Bomb Squadron  
384th Bomb Group

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DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

This was a routine flight from AAF Station 106 to Y-17 and return on the Green Project. The aircraft had landed at Y-17, its equipment unloaded and was returning to Station 106. Statements by the navigator show that he was not keeping a log or using D.R., but was following his tract on the map. When an undercast condition was encountered after passing a point identified by the navigator as Reuen, France. He did not have enough information as to winds, ground speed, etc. to enable him to accurately determine his position. After flying out the E. side for England and being unable to use the G-bar to determine his position, the navigator instructed the co-pilot to call "Daryl". This was tried without results and the radio operator attempted to contact his home base for a QDM. Base could not be contacted and the radio operator states he tried three other fields without an answer.

Realizing they were lost, the navigator decided it was best to try to get back to France as they thought the weather was clear there. On this basis he gave the pilot a heading which he hoped would get them back to the continent. After flying for sometime on this heading broken clouds were observed and the pilot decided to go down and either try to fly contact under them or find a field to land at. After descending below the clouds an island was seen which proved to be Guernsey Island.

The co-pilot tried to call "Daryl" and was immediately answered by the control tower on this island. They were instructed that there was one (1) grass runway one thousand (1000) yards long and that landing was east to west. However, the pilot states he circled the field three (3) times and the low cloud condition on the down wind side of the field made it advisable for him to land down wind and so instructed the tower there. An approach was made down wind which resulted in the above mentioned accident. Pilot states that the length of the runway along with the fact that the grass was wet made it impossible to make a safe landing under the conditions that existed. His fuel supply was too low to proceed to a more suitable base.

IMMEDIATE CAUSE: The length of the runway, the fact that the field was grass and weather conditions involved were the immediate cause of the accident.

UNDERLYING CAUSE: It is evident that the underlying cause of this accident was poor navigation. An analysis of this has been made and the following corrective measures taken to prevent a recurrence. All navigators are required to keep a log with a position report entered every fifteen (15) minutes. They are further required to keep a D.R. position at all times and have been given radio facilities for this flight with instructions to plot three (3) fixes each way on these trips. Squadron navigators are supervising this to see that it is carried out and also to give any additional aid possible to the navigators.

Continued on next page.

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

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DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

UNDERLYING CAUSE: Fuel supply and weather were definitely contributing factors in this accident. The pilot states that he did not reduce power in an effort to save gas until they were definitely lost and had started to return to France. He did not keep a record of his fuel supply and was not sure how much longer he could fly. Pilots have been instructed to keep an accurate account of fuel supply in as far as is possible in the future.

The pilot states that he could have landed up wind in the field had it not been for a low cloud condition on the down wind side of the field.

RESPONSIBILITY: The above information which was taken from the statements of the crew members indicates that the navigator was careless in the method of navigation used and that the pilot was not checking to see that the navigator was doing his work properly. This board recommends that the responsibility be apportioned as follows:

- 50 percent pilot error.
- 50 percent navigational error.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION: In view of the facts presented in the foregoing statement it is the recommendation of this board that disciplinary action be taken in the case of Flight Officer, Loren C. Legie, who was the navigator in this instance.

Aircraft Accident Committee:

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

*Donald E. Vivian*  
DONALD E. VIVIAN,  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Flight Surgeon (ex-officio).

*Nelson D. Patterson*  
NELSON D. PATTERSON,  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Pilot - Member.

*Thomas P. Davis*  
THOMAS P. DAVIS,  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Engineering Officer - Member.

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

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C O P Y

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FROM: Flying Control Officer.

TO : Officer Commanding,  
No. 160 Staging Post, GUERNSEY.

Date: 13th. June 1945.

Ref: 160SP/702#1/Pl.

Report on accident to Fortress B.17 337971.

Sir,

I was on duty on the afternoon of 11th. June in the Control Room.

At 1620 hours I received on 6440Kcs. a "Darky" call, reception being very poor from aircraft, whose call sign I could not read.

The weather at 1620 hours was as follows:

- (i) Cloud - 5/10 at one hundred feet.  
1/10 at two hundred feet.  
10/10 of medium cloud.

(ii) Visibility - 1500 yards.

(iii) Wind - SSW approx. 11 m.p.h.

The Q.D.M. of the landing strip in use was 290° - length 1000 yards.

At 1623 hours aircraft was sighted North of the airfield, flying at approx. 150 feet. Yellow vereys were fired to indicate airfield, R/T communication being kept open between aircraft and myself in the Control Room.

At 1623 hours the aircraft was given the following information;

- (i) Length of runway 1000 yards.
- (ii) Runway is a grass strip and slippery.
- (iii) Land East to West, QDM 290°.

At 1624 hours. After making several attempts to land, the pilot stated that he was very low in fuel and was landing West to East. 1625 hours aircraft landed West to East, touching down approx. 200 yards from East end of runway. Was not able to pull up before running into rough ground and therefore ran into German gun pits on the airfield boundary.

S. T. JUNE,  
Flying Control Officer.

I certify this to be a true and exact copy.

*W. D. Patterson*  
W. D. PATTERSON  
Capt. Air Corps,  
Atcg, Ops Officer.

**RESTRICTED**

*Act 6*



360.33

HEADQUARTERS 1ST AIR DIVISION, APO 557, 23 June 1945.

2nd Ind.

**RESTRICTED** (R/R/14)

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

Forwarded in compliance with Paragraph 8, Section IV, Eighth Air Force Memorandum 60-1, dated 30 May 1945.

FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL 24 JUNE 1945

*Charles E. Garvin*  
CHARLES E. GARVIN  
Capt Air Corps  
Actg. Asst. Adj. Gen.



6 Incls:  
c n/c (in trip)

RECEIVED  
HQ 8TH AIR FORCE

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HEADQUARTERS  
AAF STATION NO. 106  
Office of the Station Commander

E-P-3

APO 557,  
20 June, 1945.

**SUBJECT:** Letter of Transmittal.

**TO :** Commanding Officer, 40th Combat Wing, APO 557.

Transmitted herewith is AAF Form 14 and allied papers on aircraft accident of 11 June, 1945, on the Island of Guernsey.

For the Station Commander:

*J. R. Wyatt*  
J. R. WYATT,  
Capt, Air Corps,  
Adjutant.

6 Incls:

- Incl 1 - AAF Form 14 (Quint)
- Incl 2 - Pilots statement (quad)
- Incl 3 - Co-pilots Statement (quad)
- Incl 4 - Navigators Statement (quad)
- Incl 5 - Radio Operators Statement (quad)
- Incl 6 - F.C.O. Statement (quad)

1st Ind.  
HQ, 40TH BOMB WING (H), STATION 111, APO 557, 21 June 1945.

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

This Headquarters concurs with the findings and recommendations of the aircraft accident committee.

**FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:**

*Norman P. Spicer*  
NORMAN P. SPICER,  
1st Lt., Air Corps,  
Adjutant.

6 Incl.  
Withdrawn: 1 copy form 14.

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