

MESSAGE CENTER
NO. 9
BIRMINGHAM ARMY AIR BASE
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

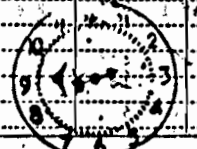
WAR DEPARTMENT
BIRMINGHAM ARMY AIR BASE
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES
REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

Accident No. 43-9-16-4
4

(1) Place Birmingham, Alabama (2) Date 16 September, 1942
AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model B-26-B (5) A. F. No. 41-17936 (6) Station Lakeland, Fla.
Organization: (7) 3rd Bomb Comd (8) 320th (9) 442 Bombardment Squadron
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)

PERSONNEL

DUTY	NAME (Last name first)	RATING	SERIAL NO.	RANK	PERSONNEL CLASS	BRANCH	Air Force on Command	RESULT TO PERSONNEL	USE OF PARACHUTE
(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)
P	Taylor, Frank W.	P	0-726506	2nd Lt.	21	AC		Fatal	4
P	Wade, Wm. F. (PART 7/26/42)	P	0-728134	2nd Lt.	21	AC		Fatal	4
B	Johnson, John A.	B	0-860364	2nd Lt.	21	AC		Fatal	4
E	Tom, Wm. John	-	16091357	Sgt.	16	AC		Fatal	4
R	Schlottman, Gordon B.	-	38043793	S/Sgt.	16	AC		Fatal	4
X	Drott, Reynold J.	-	34152445	Sgt.	16	AC		Fatal	4



PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT

(20) Taylor Frank W. (21) 0-726506 (22) 2nd Lt. (23) NO. 1000 DIRECTOR OF FLYING SAFETY
Assigned (25) 3rd Bomb Comd (26) 320th (27) 442 Bomb Sqdn. (28) Lakeland, Fla.
Attached for flying (29) 3rd Bomb Comd (30) 320th (31) 442 Bomb Sqdn. (32) Lakeland Fla.
Original rating (33) 6/2/42 Present rating (35) Instrument rating (37)

FIRST PILOT HOURS:
(at the time of this accident)

(38) This type 25:50 (42) Instrument time last 6 months
(39) This model 25:50 (43) Instrument time last 30 days
(40) Last 90 days 104:05 (44) Night time last 6 months
(41) Total 232:05 (45) Night time last 30 days

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

DAMAGE	(49) 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 at Birmingham AAB 0/0 Ceil. 3000'. vis. 2 mi. mod. rain showers. press. 1018.3, alt. 011. 1.A.S. 3.89. 6. St. 23

(51) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident Yes
(52) Cleared from Lakeland, Fla. (53) To Louisville, Ky. (54) Kind of clearance Contract
(55) Pilot's mission Change of Station

(56) Nature of accident Collision in full flight with a mountain.

(57) Cause of accident The accident was caused when the pilot attempted a let-down.

RESTRICTED

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

The accident committee proceeded to the scene of the crash as soon as notification of the accident was received at the base. The accident occurred on the wooded side of Double Oak Mountain about 15 miles S.E. of Birmingham at 1425. State police were already at the scene of the accident and were guarding the wreckage which was strewn over an area about 300 yards long and 100 yards wide.

Two witnesses told conflicting stories of the airplane being on fire before it struck the ground and it not being on fire before it struck the ground, but they were united in the statement that the airplane exploded on impact. The Accident Committee found no evidence of anything wrong with the airplane prior to the impact with the ground and believed that the report of the airplane on fire was due to the exhaust noises and flame of the throttled engines.

At the time of the crash there was a heavy rain falling, and a few miles south of the scene of the accident a frontal thunderstorm was in progress. The visibility was exceedingly low and the tops of nearby mountains were frequently obscured. The airplane actually broke out below the ceiling and apparently banked sharply to the left, but was unable to avoid a jutting pinnacle of Double Oak Mountain. The Birmingham Army Airport had rain showers, fog and smoke from 0600 to 1830. Visibility decreased from 6 miles at 0600 to 2 miles at 1340 and varied from 2 miles to 3/4 miles from that time until 1700. The airport was instrument from 1340 until 1930.

The pilot graduated from Flying School in July 1942 and lacked the experience needed for coping with this type of instrument flying. The pilot of another B-26 B on a similar flight plan after landing at Birmingham on account of weather, stated that he had been misinformed by Drane Field as to the severity of the frontal activity near Birmingham. It is felt that supervisory personnel was 75% at fault in clearing this pilot through the weather and the pilot was 25% responsible for failing to maintain contact flight.

Signature (Investigating Officer)

Richard H. Hachford, Maj. ac.
Charles H. [unclear]
Fred H. Labadie, 1st Lt. AC

Date 9-23-42

43-9-16-4

Plane Crash Near Here Fatal To Six Soldiers

Three Lieutenants And Trio Of Sergeants Die When Bomber Strikes Mountainside

Blinded by the heavy rain and low-hanging mist of Wednesday afternoon, a B-26 medium army bomber nosed into Double Oak Mountain, 15 miles south of Birmingham, at 2:25 p.m., bringing instant death to its six occupants, a group of army men flying north from Drane Field, Lakeland, Fla.

Identification of the victims was announced at 9 a.m. Thursday by officials of the Birmingham Army Air Base.

Dead in the first major airplane crash in Jefferson County are:

Lt. Frank W. Taylor, Houston, Tex.

Lt. John A. Johnson, Evanston, Ill.

Lt. Bill S. Wade, Long Beach, Calif.

Sgt. William John Town, Detroit, Mich.

Sgt. Reynold J. Drott, Houma, La.

Sgt. Gorman B. Schlottman, Barrington, Ill.

Destination of the flight was not announced by the air base here, but the bomber was not expected to make a landing during the afternoon at the local airport.

Eye-witness reports that the plane was on fire before it crashed into heavy woods on the mountain were discredited by air base officials, who attributed the accident to weather conditions.

According to witnesses, who told their stories to a large crowd which gathered near the scene about one-quarter mile off the Florida Short Route, the pilot was attempting to reach better visibility at a lower altitude.

Apparently seeing one spur of the mountain directly ahead of him, he swerved the plane and crashed into another ridge.

Soldiers of the local air base were posted as guards on the scene Thursday, and clearing of the wreckage was begun. Wings and body of the big plane lay nearby in the shadow of an airlines beacon on the north side of the mountain.

Turn to Page 6, Column 1

Plane Thought To Be A B-26, Twin Engined Air Force Ship

TRAFFIC JAMMED ON SHORT ROUTE

Bad Visibility May Have Been Accident Cause On Double Oak

Six men perished when a plane crashed about 2:25 p.m. Wednesday one-quarter mile off the Florida Short Route about 15 miles south of Birmingham.

The plane, which was demolished, was believed to be a B-26, twin-engined, army bomber.

Neither identity of the plane nor of the victims was available early Friday.

It was first believed that seven were killed, but later the death toll was definitely established as six.

The plane went down in a wooded section east of the Short Route about one-half mile northeast of the airlines beacon on the north side of Double Oak Mountain.

Witnesses said they believed the pilot was attempting to let down through the overcast and heavy rain. Apparently seeing one section of the mountain in front, he turned and crashed into another part.

Visibility at the time of the crash was exceptionally poor, it was pointed out.

Personnel from the Birmingham Army Air Base, Municipal Airport, highway patrolmen and ambulances from Johns-Service were dispatched to the scene.

Highway patrolmen reported a heavy congestion of traffic on the highway near the scene, and considerable effort and time were required to clear the immediate area of autos and spectators. It was announced.

Three Army Officers

Continued From Page 1

A seventh man from the Lakeland Field was at first believed to have been aboard, but the number of victims was later set definitely at six.

Highway Congested

News of the crash brought speculators from miles up and down the highway to the scene late Wednesday, but armed guards surrounded the wooded area near the wreck, throwing up the barrier of military secrecy.

Officials from the local air base, Municipal Airport and highway patrolmen were summoned to the mountain immediately, and a long line of ambulances stretched up and down the highway. The bodies were removed by Johns-Service.

According to local airport officials, this was the first air fatality in the Jefferson County sector since an accident near Warrior about a year ago, in which two army cadets were killed and three planes crashed when a flight of about 30 planes was attempting to reach the Birmingham airport during an electrical storm.

Crash of a small plane in Central Park in August, 1936, brought death to two local fliers.

43-7-16-4

SEP 17 42 PM

ACCIDENT REPORT 499



C-17 110/108 PRY

ARMY AIR BASE BHAM ALABAMA SEPTEMBER 16 1942

RECEIVED
HQ. AAF, DIRECTOR
OF FLYING SAFETY

CONRAD WASHINGTON D. C.

COMBAT TROOP NATIONAL GUARD ARMY TAMPA FLORIDA

CHIEF OF AIR SERVICE COR. AND WRIGHTFIELD OHIO

CO SUB-DEPOT MAXWELL FIELD ALABAMA

BCW OPERATIONS S48X SEPTEMBER 16 1942 1439GMT 15 MILES NORTH OF

BIRMINGHAM ALABAMA FRANK W TAYLOR LIEUTENANT UNKNOWN 1 DASH B IN

B-26-B-41-17936 ENGINE NUMBERS UNKNOWN DRAIN FIELD LAVELAND FLORIDA

CRASHED AND BURSTED COMPLETELY. WRECK MAXWELL SUB-DEPOT NOTIFIED PILOT

AND CREW BILL F WADSWORTH LIEUTENANT CO-PILOT JOHN A JOHNSON LIEUTENANT

BOBANDIER WILLIAM JOHN TOWN SGT NORMAN B SCHLOTTMAN PVT ROYCE

J DHOFF 3RD MILITARY PERIOD BEILING 3000 FEET OVERCAST LOWER BROKEN

2 MILES VISIBILITY HEAVY RAIN AND LIGHT SMOKE COMMA HEAVY HAZE AND

VISIBILITY ZERO AT PALON O ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION NOT USED TO DETERMINE FAILURE

OF MATERIAL OR EQUIPMENT UNDETERMINED. IN REPLY CITE 42

COMBAT TROOP BIRMINGHAM

Recd in AAF Mess. Cent 171620Z
Phoned to AFITS 171:15 Z JRM

MASTER COPY

XIO
EDITORS:
IN 2ND PGH BIRMINGHAM PLANE CRASH PLS MAKE
IT READ: LT. JOHN A. JOHNSON, EVANSTON, ILL., AND SGT. GORMAN B.
SCHLOTTMAN, INSTEAD AS SENT. ALSO ADD TO THE LIST OF DEAD: SGT.
WILLIAM JOHN TOWN, DETROIT, MICH. ARMY CORRECTION.
UPA BIRMINGHAM.
BG1056A.

43-9-16-4
1/2

43-9-16-4

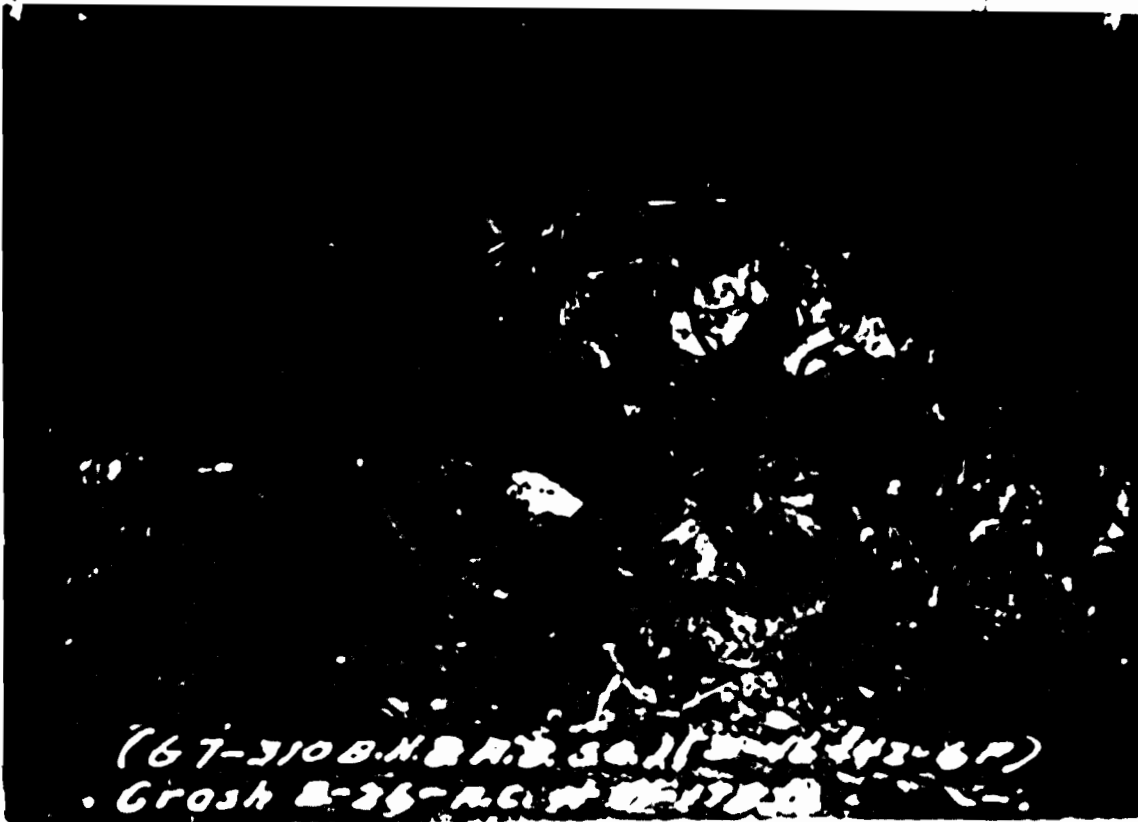


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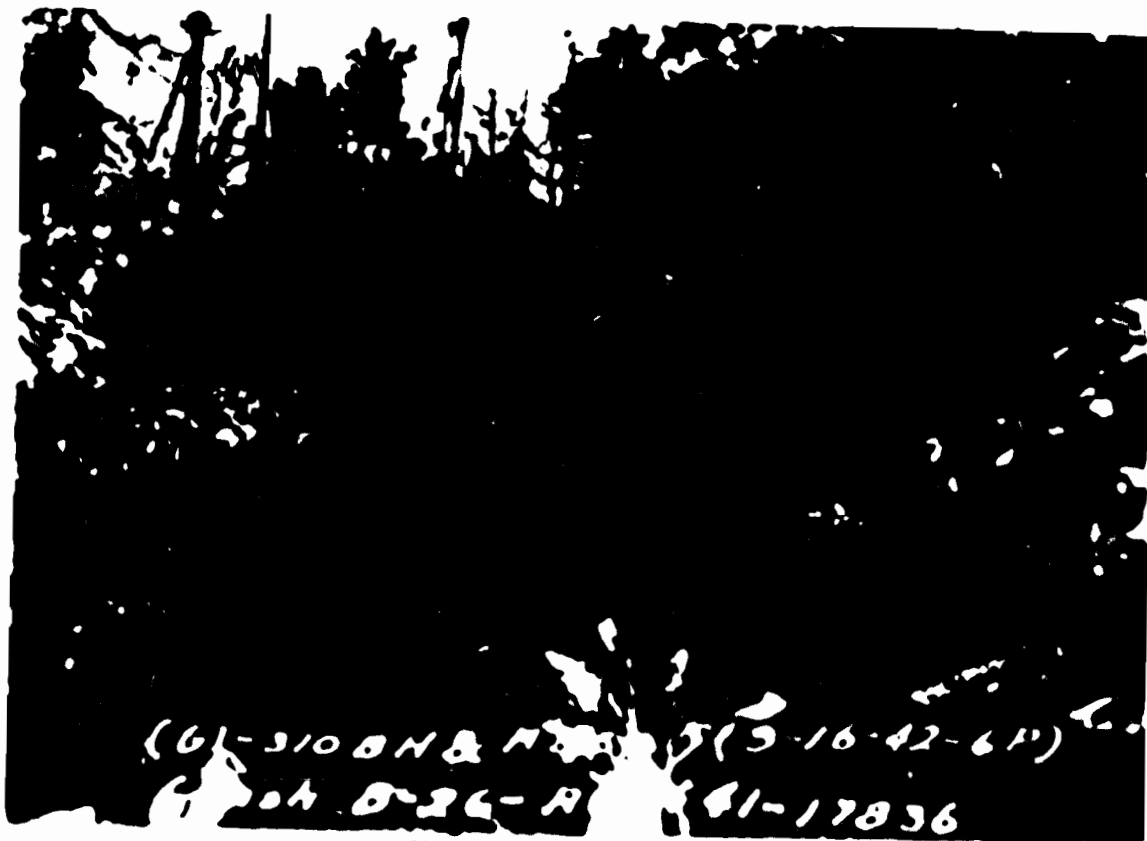
(67-310 B.N.B.A. 301 (2-14-67))
CROSS B-35-A.C. 1/1/67

100-100



(67-3108 N & A 250.1 (5-16-42-61))
Crosby B-26-A 41-17836

17836



(67-3108 N & A 250.1 (5-16-42-61))
Crosby B-26-A 41-17836

17836

SEP 17 42 PM

ACCIDENT REPORT 500



RECEIVED
HQ. AAF, DIRECTOR
OF FLYING SAFETY

AA16 BOVT TWS DAID 3

BIRMINGHAM ALA SEPT 16 545P 1942

COMAAF

WASH DC

WORD COUNT 76/74 BGT: OPH 5415 SEPT 16 AT APPROXIMATELY
1839 GMT PLANE UNKNOWN. CRASHED AND BURNED 15 MILES SOUTH

OF BIRMINGHAM. PILOT UNKNOWN. MISSION UNKNOWN. MODEL
AND SERIAL NO UNKNOWN. HOME STATION UNKNOWN. CAUSE OF ACCIDENT
UNKNOWN. DAMAGE UNKNOWN, INVESTIGATION IN PROGRESS NAMES AND
INJURIES TO PERSONNEL UNKNOWN. 3000 FT OVERCAST LOWER BROKEN
2-MILES-MODERATE RAIN LIGHT SMOKE. PARACHUTES USED. UNKNOWN.
UNKNOWN. FAILURE OF EQUIPMENT OR MATERIAL UNKNOWN. FURTHER
INFORMATION AVAILABLE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

ORAB BIRMINGHAM.

Recd in AAF Mess Cent 171230Z
Phoned to APTFS 171215Z TJS
ERK

MASTER COPY

DISTRIBUTION

AFMAG (CENT FILES)
AFMBS (BAG)
AFPMH (3 CYS)
AFATL
AFPHO

TAO

APTFS (3 CYS) ✓
APTAS
APTSM
AFBYO
AMISP

43-9-16-4

Phoned in from Message Center at 6:15 a.m., Sept. 17, 1942

Birmingham, Alabama. BGM Operations. S41E. Sept. 16, 1942, at approximately 1439 CWT. Plane unknown. Crashed and burned 15 miles South of Birmingham. Pilot unknown. Mission unknown. Model and serial number unknown. Home station unknown. Cause of accident unknown. Damage unknown. Investigation in progress. 2 miles, moderate light rain, smoke. Parachute use unknown. Unknown. Failure of equipment or materiel unknown. Further information available as soon as possible.

COAB BIRMINGHAM

AAB Birmingham, Alabama. BGM Operations. S48E. Sept. 16, 1942, 1439 CWT 15 miles South of Birmingham, Ala. Frank W. Taylor, Lt., unknown, T-5 in B-26-B, 41-17836. Engine numbers unknown. Drawn Field, Lakeland, Fla., crashed and burned. Complete wreck. Maxwell Sub-depot, unknown. Pilot and crew, Bill F. Wade, Lt.; Co-pilot, John A. Johnson, Lt.; Bombardier William W. Pown, Sgt; Norman E. Schlotteman, private; Reynold J. Drott, Sgt.; killed. Ceiling 3000 feet, overcast, lower broken, 2 miles. Visibility. Moderate rain and light smoke, heavy rain and visibility zero at place of accident. Parachutes not used. Unknown. Failure of materiel or equipment undetermined. Report cite 42.

COAB BIRMINGHAM

MASTER COPY

43-9-16-4 10

43-9-16-4

Phoned in from Public Relations at 11:25 a.m., Sept. 17, 1942.

Birmingham, Alabama, Sept. 17, UP. The Army Air Base today announced the names of six flyers who lost their lives in a crash of an army medium bomber yesterday afternoon 15 miles from Birmingham. They were Lt. Frank M. Taylor of Houston, Texas, Lt. John A. Johnson of Anniston, Alabama, Lt. Bill F. Wade, of Long Beach, California, Sgt. Reynold J. Drott of Houma, Louisiana, and Private ~~xxx~~ Gorman B. Schlottman of Barrington, Illinois. Air Base officials said the plane was enroute from the Army Air Base at Lakeland, Florida to an unannounced destination at the time of the crash. Army investigators said they believed the crew was killed instantly when the plane crashed. An unidentified eye witness said he saw one of the motors of the twin engine bomber catch fire and explode just before the ship crashed into Double Oak Mountain. Ambulance attendants said wreckage of the plane was scattered for hundreds of feet across the mountain top.

HS 1006 AM

MASTER COPY

43-9-16-4

Taylor Frank W.

43-9-16-4

September Accident

X9

BIRMINGHAM, ALA., SEPT. 16.--(UP)--AT LEAST FIVE MEMBERS OF THE CREW OF A TWO MOTORED ARMY BOMBER WERE REPORTED KILLED TODAY WHEN THE PLANE CRASHED AND BURNED ABOUT 15 MILES FROM HERE DURING A RAINSTORM EARLY THIS AFTERNOON.

NO DETAILS OF THE CRASH OR THE NAMES OF THOSE KILLED WERE IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE.

EYE WITNESSES SAID THE BIG BOMBER CRASHED INTO THE AIR BEACON ON DOUBLE OAK MOUNTAIN, LOCATED 200 YARDS OFF THE FLORIDA SHORT ROUTE HIGHWAY.

STATE HIGHWAY PATROLMEN, WHO RUSHED TO THE SCENE, SAID THEY WERE UNABLE TO IDENTIFY ANY OF THE AIRMEN. SOME OF THE BODIES WERE FLUNG INTO NEARBY TREES, OFFICERS SAID.

H429P..

43-9-16-4



RECEIVED
DIRECTOR
OF FLYING SAFETY

J3

1ST LEAD

BIRMINGHAM, ALA., SEPT. 16.--(UP)--AT LEAST POSSIBLY NINE, PERSONS WERE BELIEVED KILLED WHEN A TWO-MOTORED ARMY BOMBER CRASHED AND BURNED ABOUT 15 MILES FROM HERE, ATOP DOUBLE OAK MOUNTAIN, LATE TODAY.

OFFICIALS AT THE BIRMINGHAM AIR BASE SAID THEY BELIEVED THE SHIP WAS A B-26. AN AMBULANCE DRIVER WHO WENT TO THE SCENE EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT BETWEEN SEVEN AND NINE VICTIMS WERE KILLED, BUT THE ARMY POSTPONED OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT.

AN UNIDENTIFIED EYE-WITNESS WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THE PLANE'S MOTORS CAUGHT FIRE AND THERE WAS AN EXPLOSION. THE BOMBER CRASHED INTO THE 1,600-FOOT MOUNTAIN.

(PICKUP 2ND PGH. EARLY: NO DETAILS, ETC.)

EC553P..

43-9-16-4



RECEIVED
DIRECTOR
OF FLYING SAFETY

OPR
MG 188 OK TM
WGCAMC 188 CONTROLS OK

*main message
attached to
form 17 plus*

MG QI
MG 188 GA
HQRS: WA 234 TO MG 188 SR NO. 4, SEPT. 17, 1942 TIME 9 00 AM EWT
MSG: CAPTAIN ALTA
PHONED IN FROM MESSAGE CENTER AT 8 15 AM, SEPT. 17, 1942.
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA. BGM OPERATIONS S41E. SEPT. 16, 1942 AT APPROX-
8. 53. 6. 1. IMATELY 1439
PLANE UNKNOWN. CRASHED AND BURNED
ARE YOU RECEIVING THE MSG. OK AS I AM HAVING TIME WITH THE RIBON.

63 GA
WILL START FROM , AT APPROXIMATELY 1439 CWT. PLANE UNKNOWN,
CRASHED AND BURNED 15 MILES SOUTH OF BIRMINGHAM. PILOT UNKNOWN.
MISSION UNKNOWN. MODEL AND SERIAL NUMBER INKNOWN. HOME STATION
UNKNOWN. CAUSE OF ACCIDENT UNKNOWN. DAMAGE UNKNOWN. INVESTIGATION IN
PROGRESS. 2 MILES, MODERATE LIGHT RAIN, SMOKE. PARACHUTE USE UNKNOWN
. UNKNOWN. FAILURE OF EQUIPMENT OR MATERIAL UNKNOWN. 4 FURTHER INFORMA-
TION AVAILABLE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
COAB BIRMINGHAM

AAB BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA. BGM OPERATIONS. S48E. SEPT. 16, 1942,
1439 CWT 15 MILES SOUTH OF BIRMINGHAM, ALA. FRANK W. TAYLOR, LT.,
UNKNOWN, T-5 IN B-26-B, 41-17836. ENGINE NUMBERS UNKNOWN. DRAIN
FIELD, LAKELAND, FLA., CRASHED AND BURNED. COMPLETE WRECK.
MAXWELL SUB-~~3895~~, UNKNOWN. PILOT AND CREW BILL F. WADE, LT.,
COPILOT JOHN A. JOHNSON, LT., BOMBARDIER WILLIAM W. POWN, SGT.,
HORMAN B. SCHLOTTEMAN, PRIVATE, REYNOLD J. DROTT, SGT., KILLED.
CEILING 3000 FEET, OVERCAST, LOWER BROKEN, 2 MILES. VISIBILITY.
MADERATE RAIN AND LIGHT SMOKE, HEAVY RAIN AND VISIBILITY ZERO AT
PLACE OF ACCIDENT. PARACHUTES NOT USED. UNKNOWN. FAILURE OF MATERIEL
OR EQUIPMENT UNDETERMINED. REPORT CITE 42.
COAB FTBENNING.

- 1/8 ACK MSG. PLS SFC

MESSAGE RCED OK
END SS
WIN PLS
OK

*file with
incident*

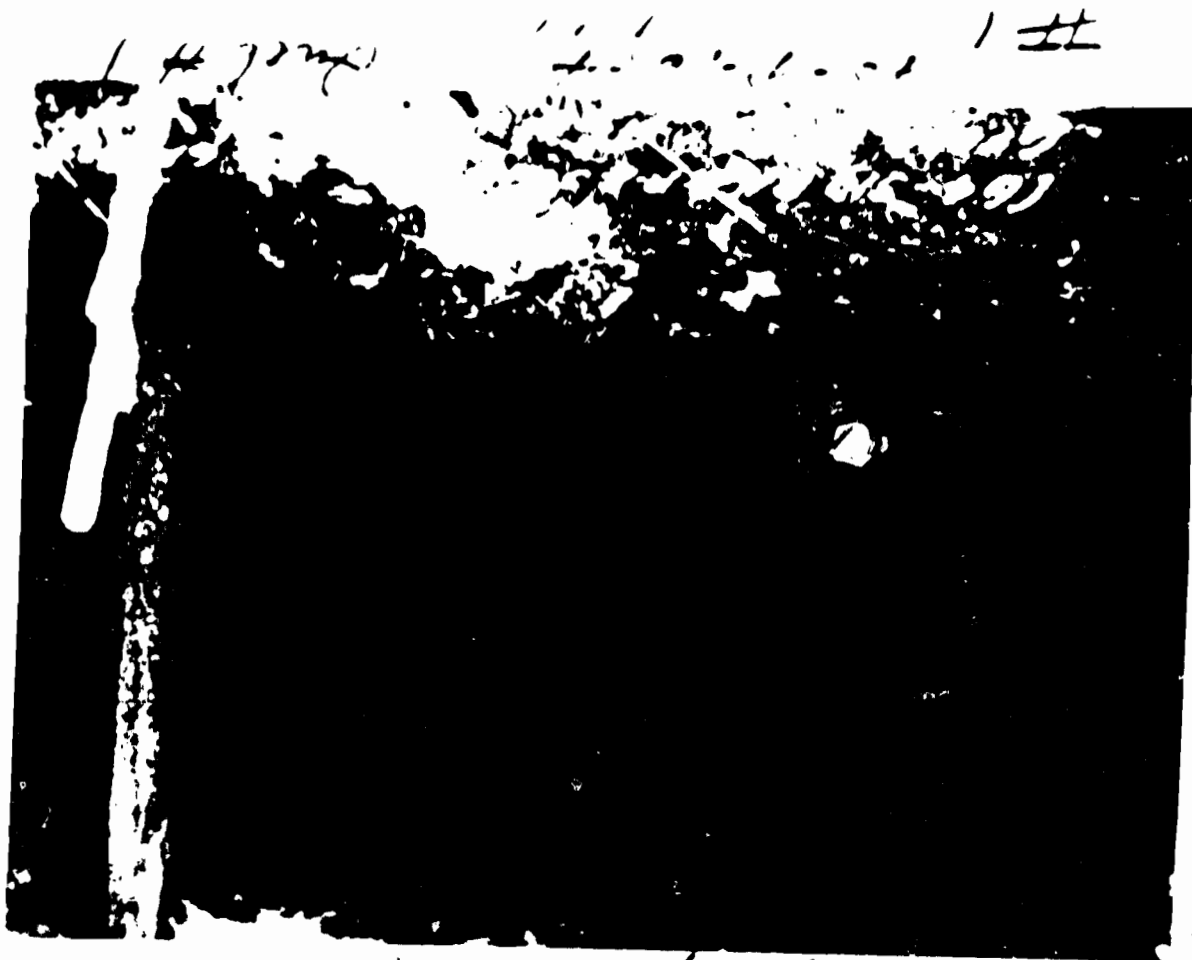
CORRECTION THAT IS SUB-DEPOT DO YOU UNDERSTAND PLS
YES

END SFC
END SS

43-9-16-4



OFFICE OF FLYING SAFETY
ACCIDENT PREVENTION
DIVISION



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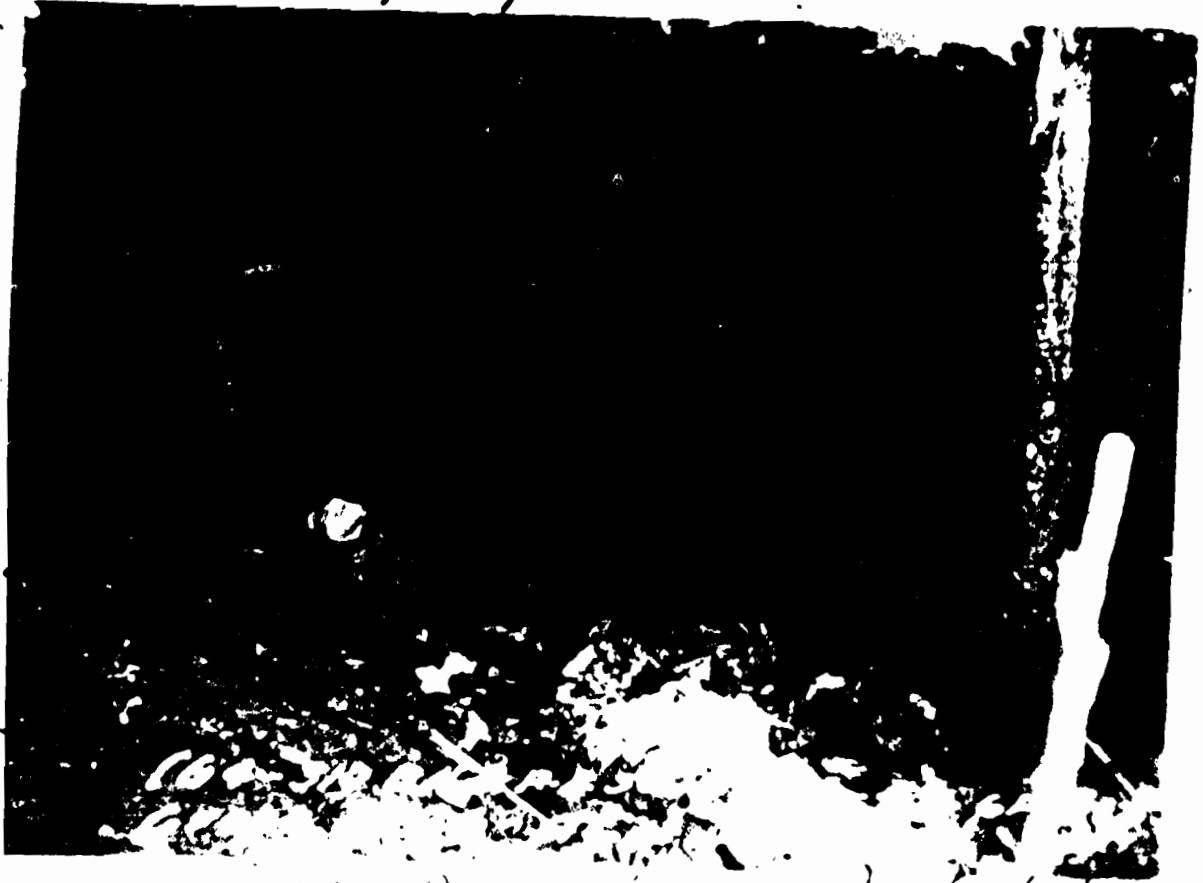
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#3 Top



#2004

#1 10-7-1074 Incl #1



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1942

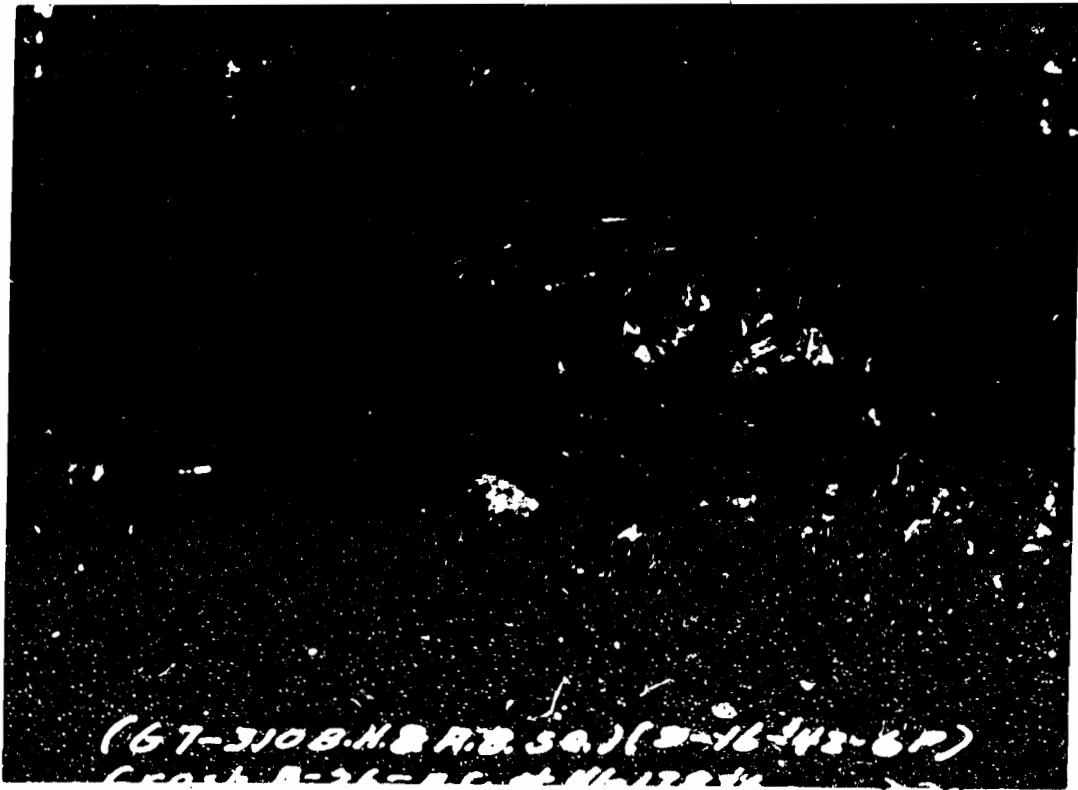


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7:11

(61-310BH & RASR) (9-16-42-6P)
61-34 B-26-R 61-17836



(67-310 B.N.B.A.S.O.) (9-16-42-6P)

Crash 0-26-AC #41-12436

Incl #1



(68-310 B.N.B.A.S.O.) (9-16-42-6P)

Crash 0-26-AC #41-12436

Incl #1

WAR DEPARTMENT
HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES
HEADQUARTERS SAFETY REGION NO. 4
Maxwell Field, Montgomery, Alabama

Date 9-28-42

MEMORANDUM FOR:

H. Ester

The reports of another
B-26 accident at Birmingham
and the two out of
Barlesdale Field will
be sent in as soon
as investigation is
complete



Charles S. Callahan

Signature

1 10 4
DIRECTORATE OF FLYING SAFETY

U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES
DIRECTORATE OF FLYING SAFETY

REGIONAL SAFETY OFFICER'S REPORT
AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

Accident No. _____

Safety Reg. No. 4

Date: 9-28-42

LOCATION: 15 Miles South Southeast of Birmingham, Alabama.

DATE: September 16, 1942. TIME: 1425 CWT

AIRCRAFT: Type: Bomber Model: B-26B A. C. Number: 41-17836

CREW: Pilot--Frank W. Taylor, 2nd Lieutenant
Co-Pilot--William F. Wade, 2nd Lieutenant
Bombardier--John A. Johnson, 2nd Lieutenant
Engineer--William John Pown, Sergeant
Radio Operator--Gordon B. Schlottman, Staff Sergeant
Other--Reynold J. Drott, Sergeant
Result: Fatal to all occupants.

NARRATION OF EVENTS: Flight was cleared from Lakeland, Florida, to Louisville, Kentucky, via Birmingham, Alabama. Contact Flight Rules with no landing at Birmingham. At 1340 the Airport at Birmingham reported instrument conditions, according to Army Observer, and at 1412, according to C. A. A. Observer. Both of these stations are located at Birmingham Airport.

The subject aircraft flew into the instrument weather and, at the time given above, crashed into the side of one of the many mountains near Birmingham, and exploded and burned.

INVESTIGATION DISCLOSED: The C. A. A. forecasts and Army forecasts differ. The enclosed copy of C. A. A. forecast would not indicate a condition which would be dangerous.

There is no Army forecast enclosed because they are destroyed when no longer of value. However, the Sergeant in charge of the Army weather stations at Birmingham Army Air Base repeated from memory the forecast he made the morning of the 16th. He gave the same report to some Birmingham officers, who were planning a flight that morning. He predicted a cold front would pass during the afternoon with the Airport under instrument conditions at 1400. He called for thunder shower activity and low ceilings from 0800 to 2400, becoming worse after 1200, continued rain during entire period.

Recd

SEP 30 1942

- 1 -

43-4-16-4

TF

In discussing the frontal conditions with Mr. Gibson, Operator in charge of Weather Bureau for the C. A. A., I was informed that, as far as the Weather Bureau was concerned, there was no cold front. However, Mr. Gibson told me that during the four hour period, during which the crash occurred, the automatic rain indicator showed two inches of rainfall. The heaviest part of the rain at Birmingham Airport fell about one hour after the crash of the B-26 and Mr. Gibson said since the storm came from the South a downpour of the same intensity would have occurred at the scene of the crash.

I asked Mr. Gibson if he would describe the storm as a small one or a large one. He said it was a large one. The Weather Sergeant at the Air Base said he would describe the same thunderstorm as indicating the passage of the cold front which he had forecast earlier that day.

I talked to a Mr. Stewart, who lives close to the scene of the crash. He is not too familiar with aviation but claims to have spent some time around the Birmingham Airport in days gone by. He was sitting on his front porch the afternoon of the 16th when he looked up and saw the ship heading South. He wasn't sure whether his house would be hit or not, so he ran out into the yard.

The weather, according to Mr. Stewart which wasn't as might have been according to Mr. Gibson, was a low ceiling and a slight drizzle with visibility very poor. However, the natives said it was zero-zero just over the ridge and the Birmingham weather reports just 15 miles away, show instrument conditions with showers. This would indicate bad flying conditions if the pilot were trying to fly contact.

Mr. Stewart said the airplane didn't seem to be under power but as it neared his house it was in a slight left bank and turned to the Northwest where it hit the ground.

The enclosed picture marked #1, shows the point of impact and investigation indicates that the airplane hit in about a thirty degree bank and from a flight angle of about sixty-five degrees. After impact the airplane exploded and scattered bits of metal and human flesh over an area of better than $\frac{1}{2}$ mile. The trees were burned for more than 200 feet from point of impact.

Nothing could be ascertained from wreckage as to any mechanical failure.

Mr. Stewart said the sound of the airplane was a whistling sound like an airplane makes when landing. He said there was some flames.

COMMENTS:

My explanation of the flame described by Mr. Stewart would be the usual backfire and popping caused by closing the throttle. It would seem to me that the airplane had been coming out of a spin when it crashed.

Operations Officers should understand more about the weather before clearing flights such as this one. In a telephone conversation with the present Operations Officer at Lakeland, Florida, I was informed that the Weather Sergeant informed Captain Wallin, the Operations Officer at that time, that the weather was bad. The present Operations Officer said such flights might be cleared to give the pilots practice in instrument flight. (This was a contact flight)

I believe that pilots are being pushed into these airplanes with insufficient practice on twin-engines and familiarization with this aircraft.

PROBABLE CAUSE:

Airplane went into spin because of poor visibility, turbulent air, inability of pilot to fly this airplane on instruments:

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:

Poor supervision by higher authority.

Inability of pilot to fly instruments. No data to show flying time of pilot or instrument proficiency as this outfit was on its way overseas.

Failure of pilot to make a 180 degree turn when bad weather was encountered.

Failure of pilot to orient himself and land at Birmingham. No call was received by radio at the airport.

Impossible weather conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

More thorough meteorological training on the part of supervisory personnel.

That pilots be ordered to land or turn back before flying into such conditions.

Pilots be taught orientations while on instruments to a high degree.

Pilots be taught to use the radio if possible. (Static may have interfered if pilot did use radio.)

That less pressure be put on OTU so pilots can be better trained and arrive at the Combat Zones rather than go home in a box.

Dale E. Altman
DALE E. ALTMAN,
Captain, Air Corps,
Regional Safety Officer.

4 Incls:

- #1 - 7 photographs
- #2 - Copy Army Weather Rpt.
- #3 - U. S. Weather Bureau Forecast
- #4 - U. S. Weather Bureau Report

43-9-16-4

WAF DEPARTMENT
 Manual Code
 (Revised February 1962)

AIRWAY WEATHER REPORTS

Received at BIRMINGHAM ARMY AIR BASE
 Date 5/16/42

STATION	TIME (Local Standard)	MOON	CEILING (Feet)	SKY CONDITIONS	VISIBILITY (Miles)	WEATHER AND/OR OBSTRUCTIONS TO VISION	SEA LEVEL PRESSURE (Millibars)	TEMPERATURE AT THE AIR PORT	WIND DIRECTION-TIME	WIND SPEED CHANGE-TIME SHIFTS	WIND DIRECTION-TIME SHIFTS	ALTIMETER SETTING (Quads)	REMARKS	INITIALS
	0000	C		-0/					CALM				7AC?	
	0030	RS C		O					NE	5				
	0100	- C		O					NE	4				
	0130	R C		O					NNE	4		602		
	0200	S C		0/					NE	4			7AS?	
	0230	R C		0/					NE	3			8AS?	
	0300	- C		0/					NE	3			10AS?	
	0330	S C		0/		R-			NE	3			10ES?	
	0345	S C		0/					NE	3			10AS?	
	0400	- C		0/					NE	2			10FS?	
	0405	S C		0/		R-			ENE	2		R INTMT	10AS?	
	0430	RS C	E80	0					CALM			300 07C9	10AS?	
	0500	- C	E80	0					CALM				10AS?	
	0530	R C	E80	0					E	2			10FS?	
	0500	- C	E80	0400					E	2			5AS? 5SC?	
	0630	RS C	E80	0400	6	R-GF-			E	2			5AS? 5SC?	
	0700	- C	E80	0350	6	R-GF-			E	2			5AS? 5SC?	
	0730	R C	E80	0350	6	R-GF-K-			ENE	1			5AS? 5SC?	
	0800	S C	E80	0350	6	GF-K-			E	2		305 5709 70 5AS?	5SC?	
	0830	R C	E80	0350	6	GF-K-			E	2			5AS? 5SC?	
	0900	S C	E80	0350	6	RW-GF-K-			E	4			5AS? 5SC?	
	0930	R C	E80	0350	6	RW-GF-K-			E	4			5AS? 5SC?	
	1000	- C	E80	0350	6	RW-GF-K-			SSE	5			5AS? 5SC?	
	1030	RS C	E80	0350	6	GF-K-			SSE	5		300 5709 5AS? 5SC?	5SC?	
	1100	- C	E80	0350	6	GF-K-			SSE	5			6AS? 3CU? 1SC?	
	1130	R C	E80	0350	6	GF-K-			SSE	5			6AS? 3CU? 1SC?	
	1200	- C	E80	0350	6	GF-K-			SSE	5			6AS? 3CU? 1SC?	
	1210	S C	E80	0350	5	RW-K-			SSE	5			6AS? 3CU? 1SC?	
	1230	R C	E80	0350	5	RW-K-			SSE	6			6AS? 3CU? 2SC?	
	1300	- C	E80	0350	5	RW-K-			SSE	5			5AS? 3CU? 4SC?	
	1310	S C	E35	0	4	TRUK-			SSE	5			5AS? 4SC? 3ST?	

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY
WIND REPORTING PROCEDURE

AIRWAY WEATHER REPORTS

Received at _____
Date _____

STATION	TIME OF OBSERVATION	TYPE OF OBSERVATION	CLOUDS (Group)	SKY CONDITIONS	VISIB- ILITY (Miles)	WEATHER AND/OR OBSTRUCTIONS TO VISION	SEA LEVEL PRESSURE (Millibars)	TEMPER- ATURE AND DEW POINT	WIND DIREC- TION	WIND SPEED (Knots)	ALTITUDE FEET (Miles)	REMARKS	INITIALS
	1330	RS C	E35	30	4	RW K-			WSW	3	801	57093 SAS 4SC	LSL
	1340	S N	E35	30	2	RW K-			N	3		SAS 24SC	LSL
	1400	- N	E35	30	2	RW K-			N	2		SAS 24SC	LSL
	1415	L N	E35	30	2	RW K-			NNE	2		SAS 24SC	LSL
	1430	R N	E30	30	2	RW K-			NW	2		SAS 24SC	LSL
	1445	L N	E30	30	1 1/2	RW K-			NNE	2		SAS 24SC	LSL
	1500	R N	E20	30	2	RW K-			E	3		SAS 24SC	LSL
	1510	S C	E20	30	3	RW K-			E	3		SAS 24SC	LSL
	1530	SE N	E20	30	2	RW K-			NNE	4		SAS 24SC	LSL
	1540	S N	E15	30	1	RW+K-			E	4		SAS 24SC	LSL

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
WEATHER BUREAU
Birmingham, Ala.

Airport Station

Sept. 22, 1942

Airway forecasts as received via teletype from W.B.
Forecast Center, Atlanta, Ga. Based on 0830E map, (9/16/42)

1230 2030E AWY FCST 9/16..

MSGW JACS CSMM JXIA DBTM TMMX JXMS AGTM PSTJ KXBH AGKX
HI SCTD TO BRKN AND LWR SCTD TO LCLY BRKN CU CLDS. 3 to 5
TNSD OVR GA SC AID FLA PENINSULA AND HI OVC LWR BRKN TO
OVC IN ALA ERN MISS AND XTRM NW FLA WITH SHWRS AND WIDELY
SCTD TSHWRS ACPYD BY IREG CIGS MSTLY 2 to 3 TNSD BUT LCLY
NEAR 1 TNSD. SCTD SHWRS WILL DVLT OVR WRN AND NRN GA
AFT 1400E. VSBYS 1 to 3 MIS IN SHWRS OTRW 5 to 10 WITH
CSDRBL SMOKE.

WUG BH ED CB TRMLS. HI OVC LWR SCTD TO BRKN 2 to 3 TNSD
WITH OCNL S WRS. VSBY 5 to 10 MIS LWR SLGTLY AT TIMES IN
FCPN.

TLGibson, OIC

43-9-16-4

Incl # 3

TELETYPE SEQUENCE WEATHER REPORTS, 9/16/42 BH (CAA STATION)

0030C BH C O 183/71/69143/008
 0130C BH C O 183/70/69C/008/ 501
 0230C BH C D/ 183/70/69C/008
 0330C BH C SPL #/R- 180/70/6944/007
 0430C BH C SPL 808 186/71/70C/009/ 401 0709
 0530C BH C 858 190/72/702/010
 0630C BH C E85830DR- 190/72/7145/010
 0730C BH C E80830DR- 193/73/71C/011/R- I.T.M.T/ 30302 5705
 0830C BH C E7587R- 196/74/72C/012
 0930C BH C E7589D7 200/76/7243/013/OCNL R-
 1030C BH C SPL E7581107 200/77/7244/013/ 103 2705
 1130C BH C #/1516 200/79/7246/016
 BH C SPL 161314C E7581515TRW 200/79/7342/012/T CNTRD S
 1230C BH C #/1516RW- 200/79/7345/013
 1330C BH C E7581516TRW 193/7 /7442/011/ #/ VSB/ 902 6704
 BH C SPL 161400C E7581516RW 193/76/7442/011/VSBY 1 E
 BH N SPL 161412C E7081512RW 193/76/7442/011/VSBY 1/2 E
 X 1430C BH N E7081512RW+ 193/74/7341/011/VSBY 1/2 E
 BH C SPL 161459C E10803RW 193/74/7343/011
 1530C BH N E15802TRW 193/73/7342/011/40 VSBY 5N 2E 2S 14
 BH X SPL (1500 ?) E10801/2TRW+ 193/73/7345/011
 1630C BH N E10802TRW 200/71/70145/013/ 402 6705
 BH C SPL 161642C E10803RW+ 200/71/7012/013/51
 1730C BH N SPL E10802TRW- 200/72/72C/013/51 VSBY 2' 3E 2S 4W

43-9-76-4

Incl #4

BH C SPL 161821C E10303 TRW- 200/72/72C/013

1830C BH C E12303TRW- 193/72/72C/011

1930C BH C 18305K- 196/72/713/012/ ONE 60393 5705

2030C BH C 20307 200/71/71-2/013

2130C BH C W/3008 200/71/70-5/013

2230C BH C SPL 12306R- 200/71/70-8/013/ 103 5205

2330C BH C SPL E6031807R- 200/71/70-10/013

43-9-16-4

Incl. #4

U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES
DIRECTORATE OF FLYING SAFETY

REGIONAL SAFETY OFFICER'S REPORT
AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

Accident No. _____

Safety Reg. No. 4

Date: 9-28-42

LOCATION: 15 Miles South Southeast of Birmingham, Alabama.

DATE: September 16, 1942. TIME: 1425 CWT

AIRCRAFT: Type: Bomber Model: B-26B A. C. Number: 41-17836

CREW: Pilot—Frank W. Taylor, 2nd Lieutenant
Co-Pilot—William F. Wade, 2nd Lieutenant
Bombardier—John A. Johnson, 2nd Lieutenant
Engineer—William John Town, Sergeant
Radio Operator—Gordon B. Schlottman, Staff Sergeant
Other—Reynold J. Drott, Sergeant
Result: Fatal to all occupants.

NARRATION OF EVENTS: Flight was cleared from Lakeland, Florida, to Louisville, Kentucky, via Birmingham, Alabama. Contact Flight Rules with no landing at Birmingham. At 1340 the Airport at Birmingham reported instrument conditions, according to Army Observer, and at 1412, according to C. A. A. Observer. Both of these stations are located at Birmingham Airport.

The subject aircraft flew into the instrument weather and, at the time given above, crashed into the side of one of the many mountains near Birmingham, and exploded and burned.

INVESTIGATION DISCLOSED: The C. A. A. forecasts and Army forecasts differ. The enclosed copy of C. A. A. forecast would not indicate a condition which would be dangerous.

There is no Army forecast enclosed because they are destroyed when no longer of value. However, the Sergeant in charge of the Army weather stations at Birmingham Army Air Base repeated from memory the forecast he made the morning of the 16th. He gave the same report to some Birmingham officers, who were planning a flight that morning. He predicted a cold front would pass during the afternoon with the Airport under instrument conditions at 1400. He called for thunder shower activity and low ceilings from 0800 to 2400, becoming worse after 1200, continued rain during entire period.

In discussing the frontal conditions with Mr. Gibson, Operator in charge of Weather Bureau for the C. A. A., I was informed that, as far as the Weather Bureau was concerned, there was no cold front. However, Mr. Gibson told me that during the four hour period, during which the crash occurred, the automatic rain indicator showed two inches of rainfall. The heaviest part of the rain at Birmingham Airport fell about one hour after the crash of the B-26 and Mr. Gibson said since the storm came from the South a downpour of the same intensity would have occurred at the scene of the crash.

I asked Mr. Gibson if he would describe the storm as a small one or a large one. He said it was a large one. The Weather Sergeant at the Air Base said he would describe the same thunderstorm as indicating the passage of the cold front which he had forecast earlier that day.

I talked to a Mr. Stewart, who lives close to the scene of the crash. He is not too familiar with aviation but claims to have spent some time around the Birmingham Airport in days gone by. He was sitting on his front porch the afternoon of the 16th when he looked up and saw the ship heading South. He wasn't sure whether his house would be hit or not, so he ran out into the yard.

The weather, according to Mr. Stewart which wasn't as might have been according to Mr. Gibson, was a low ceiling and a slight drizzle with visibility very poor. However, the natives said it was zero-zero just over the ridge and the Birmingham weather reports just 15 miles away, show instrument conditions with showers. This would indicate bad flying conditions if the pilot were trying to fly contact.

Mr. Stewart said the airplane didn't seem to be under power but as it neared his house it was in a slight left bank and turned to the Northwest where it hit the ground.

The enclosed picture marked #1, shows the point of impact and investigation indicates that the airplane hit in about a thirty degree bank and from a flight angle of about sixty-five degrees. After impact the airplane exploded and scattered bits of metal and human flesh over an area of better than $\frac{1}{2}$ mile. The trees were burned for more than 200 feet from point of impact.

Nothing could be ascertained from wreckage as to any mechanical failure.

Mr. Stewart said the sound of the airplane was a whistling sound like an airplane makes when landing. He said there was some flame.

COMMENTS:

My explanation of the flame described by Mr. Stewart would be the usual backfire and popping caused by closing the throttle. It would seem to me that the airplane had been coming out of a spin when it crashed.

Operations Officers should understand more about the weather before clearing flights such as this one. In a telephone conversation with the present Operations Officer at Lakeland, Florida, I was informed that the Weather Sergeant informed Captain Mallin, the Operations Officer at that time, that the weather was bad. The present Operations Officer said such flights might be cleared to give the pilots practice in instrument flight. (This was a contact flight)

I believe that pilots are being pushed into these airplanes with insufficient practice on twin-engines and familiarization with this aircraft.

PROBABLE CAUSE:

Airplane went into spin because of poor visibility, turbulent air, inability of pilot to fly this airplane on instruments.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:

Poor supervision by higher authority.

Inability of pilot to fly instruments. No data to show flying time of pilot or instrument proficiency as this outfit was on its way overseas.

Failure of pilot to make a 180 degree turn when bad weather was encountered.

Failure of pilot to orient himself and land at Birmingham. No call was received by radio at the airport.

Impossible weather conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

More thorough meteorological training on the part of supervisory personnel.

That pilots be ordered to land or turn back before flying into such conditions.

Pilots be taught orientations while on instruments to a high degree.

Pilots be taught to use the radio if possible. (Static may have interfered if pilot did use radio.)

DO NOT REMOVE FASTENER

**THESE PAPERS ARE OFFICAL RECORDS OF
HEADQUARTERS, ARMY AIR FORCES**

PAPERS PERTAINING TO _____

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43-9-16-4

FILE NO. _____

STRITCHER, ALVIN (15 miles southeast of) B-26 AIRPLANE

43-10-16

TAYLOR, PAUL W. MADE, WILLIAM F.

