

CONFIDENTIAL

WAR DEPARTMENT

U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

Account No. _____

3-27-45

453-7-313

87

4

(1) Place Castelluccio Air Field (2) Date 3-9-45 (3) Time 1815
 AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model B-24 (5) A. F. No. 2-53959 (6) Station Castelluccio Air Field
 Organization: (7) 15th AF (8) 451st Bomb Gp (9) 725th Bomb Sq.
 (Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)

PERSONNEL

| DOVT (10) | NAME (Last name first) (11) | RATING (12) | SERIAL NO. (13) | RANK (14) | PERSONNEL CLASS (15) | BRANCH (16) | AIR FORCE OR COMMAND (17) | RESULT TO PERSONNEL (18) | USE OF PARACHUTE (19) |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| P | Sherman, Albert D. | P | 0-828558 | 2nd Lt | 18 | AC | 15th | None | No |
| EP | Blair, Edward A. | P | 0-711112 | 2nd Lt | 18 | AC | 15th | None | No |
| N | Wood, Raymond J. | N | T-133900 | F/O | 17 | AC | 15th | None | No |
| B | Reise, Alvin G. Jr. | B | 0-2065424 | 2nd Lt | 18 | AC | 15th | None | No |
| E | Budgett, Tommy J. | EG | 14165702 | S/Sgt | 38 | AAF | 15th | None | No |
| RO | Ruf, Benjamin A. | ROG1 | 2220885 | Cpl | 38 | AAF | 15th | None | No |
| NG | Moore, Edward L. | AEG1 | 13144057 | S/Sgt | 38 | AAF | 15th | None | No |
| EG | Conti, Aldo J. | AG | 42072041 | Sgt | 38 | AAF | 15th | None | No |
| TG | Ladoue, Joseph F. | AAG1 | 2072014 | Cpl | 38 | AAF | 15th | None | No |
| WG | Hanlen, Robert E. | AAEG1 | 9190624 | S/Sgt | 38 | AAF | 15th | None | No |
| F | Orsman, Kyle W. | F | 07002324 | S/Sgt | 38 | AAF | 15th | None | No |

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

(20) Sherman Albert D. (21) 0-828558 (22) 2nd Lt (23) 18 (24) AC
 (Last name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Serial number) (Rank) (Personnel class) (Branch)
 Assigned (25) 15th AF (26) 451st B. G. (27) 725th Bomb Sq. (28) Castelluccio Air Field
 (Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)
 Attached for flying (29) _____ (30) _____ (31) _____ (32) _____
 (Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)
 Original rating (33) Pilot (34) 4-15-44 Present rating (35) Pilot (36) 4-15-44 Instrument rating (37) 10-10-44
 (Rating) (Date) (Rating) (Date) (Date) (Date)

First Pilot Hours:
 (at the time of this accident) OK - T.O. - 1
 (38) This type B-24 247:55 (43) Instrument time last 6 months _____
 (39) This model B-24F 193:25 (43) Instrument time last 30 days _____
 (40) Last 90 days 141:45 (44) Night time last 6 months _____
 (41) Total 661:00 (45) Night time last 30 days _____

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

| DAMAGE | (46) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS |
|----------------------------------|---|
| (46) Aircraft <u>3</u> | Wing tip and leading edge of left wing, also blown |
| (47) Engine(s) <u>1 1 1 1</u> | left tire. |
| (48) Propeller(s) <u>1 1 1 1</u> | Both vertical stabilizers and rudders to a parked B-24. |

(49) Weather at the time of accident 6/10 strato cumulus at 3,500 feet. Wind North 12 MPH.
Variable Visibility 10 miles. Rain squall over field.

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

(56) Nature of accident Landing accident
IV B 12-17-23-80-82

(57) Cause of accident Ship not under sufficient control to avoid tail section of damaged ship near edge of runway.

(58) No. _____ BY AUTHORITY OF _____

CONFIDENTIAL

RESTRICTED

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

NARRATIVE STATEMENT

Aircraft was returning from a combat mission and still had all bombs aboard. A normal landing was executed on a very slippery runway during severe turbulence and gusty cross wind. Directional control was not gained in sufficient time to avoid slicing off vertical stabilizers and rudders of damaged aircraft parked at edge of runway. The left tire then blew out due to the heavy breaking action employed.

Several ships landing ahead of the aircraft successfully cleared the parked aircraft.

RESPONSIBILITY

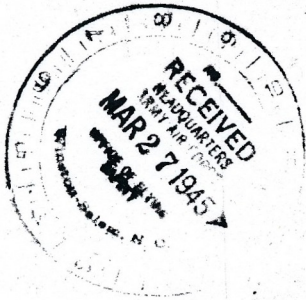
Pilot Technique - 60%.

Extenuating circumstances of slippery runway, bomb load and severe crosswind - 30%.

~~Tower Officer error in allowing landings before removal of damaged aircraft. 10%.~~

ACTION TO PREVENT REPETITION

All pilots have been instructed in necessity of landing short on slippery runway with bomb load. Tower officers have been instructed that all damaged aircraft endangering other landing aircraft will be removed to a safe distance before landing again are permitted.



Leroy E. Stefankowicz
LEROY E. STEFANKOWICZ,
Colonel, Air Corps,
Commanding.

John S. Hoffcock
JOHN S. HOPPOCK,
Lt. Colonel, Air Corps.

Francis J. Hoermann
FRANCIS J. HOERMANN,
Lt. Colonel, Air Corps,
Acft. Accident Officer.

Oscar L. Wagner
OSCAR L. WAGNER,
Major, Medical Dpt.

Charles B. Hodges Jr.
CHARLES B. HODGES JR.,
Major, Air Corps.

Richard E. Prouty
RICHARD E. PROUTY,
Captain, Air Corps,
Acft. Investigating Officer.

Signature _____
(Investigating Officer)

Date _____

725TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
451ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 U. S. Army

11 March 1945.

ACCIDENT STATEMENT

On March 9, 1945 I was flying ship # 36 (999) in #4 position in Charlie flight. We had returned to the base with our bombs still aboard because of adverse weather conditions at the briefed target.

Upon return to the base at approximately 1745 hours we encountered rather turbulent air and poor visibility. Because of the relative position of the flights Able and Dog flights peeled off before Charlie and a number were in the pattern when our flight went into right echelon. It was very difficult to see the field and the ships were forced to follow the ship in front of them. The tower had cautioned the flights about a gusty cross wind from the left which proved to be an almost direct tailwind on landing. The pattern was large and almost every ship was overturning the runway on final approach because of the limited visibility.

Charlie flight peeled and ships entered the pattern. After turning final approach and picking up the runway I saw a double red flare and the tower announced that the field was closed to landing. There was quite a bit of interference on the radio and I did not hear any mention made of the reason for closing the field. There was a large rain cloud northwest of the base that passed over the runway at this time, cutting ceiling and visibility to zero and I figured it was the reason for telling the ships to go around. We made a large pattern skirting the rain cloud and were on the downwind leg when the tower said the field was open again. I turned base leg behind another plane and lost the exact location of the runway again. The ship in front of me and I both overturned but corrected direction enough to line up. The wind at this time seemed to be behind from the left. There was still turbulence and I had difficulty setting the ship down in the first third of the runway. I could see ship # 62 (372) on the left side of the runway on the eastern end of the field before I was on the ground but thought that it was clear of the runway. After I hit, the ship was traveling quite fast and it was necessary to apply hard brakes in order to slow down. The matting was slippery and the plane began sliding almost on a line with the runway but with the longitudinal axis of the fuselage about 10 degrees to the left. I could see that I was going to collide with # 62 by this time and applied full right rudder and brake but was unable to prevent cutting off the tops of both vertical stabilizers on # 62 with the outer portion of my left wing. Several seconds later my left tire blew out because of the hard brake pressure I had on both tires. I was forced to pull the ship left clear of the runway because other planes were still landing. We climbed out of the airplane quickly because another ship # 40 (908) was coming down the runway. I did not see his landing but did see him ground loop in an attempt to miss collision with # 62. This was only partially successful because #62 left wing hit #40's fuselage aft of the bombay and broke #40 in half.

Damage to the wing tip and leading edge to a point about eight feet in from the tip and the flat tire were the only things # 36 appeared to have suffered in the accident.

Albert D. Sherman Jr.
ALBERT D. SHERMAN JR.
2nd Lt., AC
Pilot

S T A T E M E N T

On the mission of 9 March 1945, I was riding as copilot for LT. SHERMAN. We were flying #4 position in Charlie Flight in ship #36.

Upon returning to the base, the visibility was poor and rapidly becoming worse. The air was very turbulent. Charlie Flight made three 360° turns to allow Able and Dog Flights to peel off and land. After we were cleared, with ships still in the pattern, we followed around in trail on a very irregular and extended traffic pattern. We overshot the final turn and lined up with considerable difficulty. When we had approached the runway, Lt. Sherman pulled up and went around. I thought this must be because of the rain cloud obscuring the east half of the runway. We had more difficulty in seeing the runway again and overshot the final. We had difficulty in lining up, but did so with rapid "S" turns. The Bombardier was calling airspeed and a few seconds after he called "105 m.p.h" we hit in a nose high attitude. Immediately, Lt. Sherman pushed the nose down and applied brakes. It was then that we saw that #62 was not clearing the runway. Lt. Sherman had in hard right rudder and brakes. The ship didn't seem to decelerate at all. We took #62's rudders and vertical stabilizers off just above the elevators with our left wing tip. Just after this, our left tire blew and the Engineer called from the top hatch to clear the runway that there was a ship right behind us. Lt. Sherman cleared the runway with full left throttle. I then shoved the mixtures to idle cut-off and cut all the mag. switches and crash bar.

Just then, I saw #40 ground loop into #62 and a double red flare fired near by. We cleared the ship and ran across the field because of other ships landing.

Edward A. Blair

EDWARD A. BLAIR
2nd. Lt., AC
Co-Pilot

S T A T E M E N T

On the late afternoon of 9 March 1945. I was officer in charge of the tower at Castelluccio Air Base. At that time, from approximately 1750 until 1842, ships were returning and landing from an Operational Mission.

The wind at the time I first started to land the ships was from the East North East at about 5 to 10 miles an hour. The sky was approximately 8/10 to 9/10 covered with low stratus at 5,000 ft. and cumulus 3,000 to 5,000 ft. There was also an active shower North of the field in the vicinity of Foggia and due to this the visibility was poor in the North Area of the field. In other areas the visibility was 10 miles.

As the ships landed the wind increased in velocity with gusts. Ships were in a hurry to land and the pattern was wide and full. The cross wind on landing was also a factor in widening the pattern. It was difficult to establish proper tower contact with all ships due to static interference of nearby stern and the fact that many pilots were originating calls themselves due to low gas supply.

Ships were landing at a rapid rate and as ship #372 rolled by the tower ship #236 was touching down at the end of the runway. At that particular time the storm which was north of the field hit the field. The storm was of short duration but it was accompanied by rain and violent gusty wind which exceeded 50 miles per hour. Just as this wind reached the field the above two ships (372 and 236) were on the runway. The violence of the wind undoubtedly caused ship #372 to veer into it, a partial ground loop resulted, the ship leaving the runway near the east end at approximately 90 degrees to it. Ship #236 seemed to have no difficulty in maintaining ground control and moved on down the runway and cleared it.

I experienced some difficulty in keeping the ships from landing. They were told the field was closed and informed to hold in the pattern until further notice. At that time I closed the field due to the violence of the wind which seemed to be the factor involved in causing ship #372 to go off the runway. Ship #372 landed at 1804 and ship #236 at 1805.

I kept the field closed for approximately seven (7) minutes, waiting for the local cyclonic disturbance to pass and crash crew to move the damaged ship #372 further from the runway. At this time a ship called for emergency landing, having just lost 2 engines. As the storm was now just passed and since ship #236 had cleared ship #372 in landing, I granted the distressed ship #339 permission to land, which he did successfully.

As it was rapidly growing dark and the ships aloft were clamoring to land due to darkness, bomb load and fuel shortage, and since two ships had now successfully cleared the damaged ship #372, I opened the field to the remainder of the ships to landing. All ships were notified of the cross wind, slippery condition of the runway, location of the damaged ship at the far end of the runway, and told to land short. Ship #406 made a successful landing.

Ship #900 called in on the approach and was informed to land short, that the runway was slippery and that a ship was off the left side of it at the end. His landing was a little long, and I have been informed that his wing tip clipped the vertical fin of ship #372 as he passed him. This ship continued to the end of the runway and cleared it.

Ship #608 was making his approach simultaneously and when he called he was informed of the slippery condition of the runway, that his approach was ~~too long and on~~ the base leg, that he had better go around. It is believed that this ship was not in contact with the tower. He touched down on the runway approximately in front of the tower and applied brakes immediately. This seem to cause the ship to skid sideways along the runway. He left the runway and collided with ship #572 as his ship came to rest.

Ships landed in the following order:

| <u>SHIP NO.</u> | <u>TIME</u> |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 42-51572 | 1804 |
| 42-95236 | 1805 |
| 44-49839 | 1812 |
| 44-50466 | 1814 |
| 42-51999 | 1815 |
| 42-94908 | 1816 |

William Mattes III

WILLIAM MATTES III,
Captain, Air Corps,
Asst. Gp. Operations Officer.

