

U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES  
REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

*2 planes*  
45-10-24-513

11-17-44  
A-501

(1) Place Castelluccio Air Field, Italy (2) Date 24 October, 1944 (3) Time 1130  
 AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model B-24 J 090 (5) A. F. No. 42-78589 (6) Station Castelluccio Air Field  
 Organization: (7) 15th (8) 451st (9) 724th (Squadron) Y169  
 (Command and Air Force) (Group)

PERSONNEL

DUTY (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	CUSTER, ROBERT E.	P	0-667805	1st Lt.	01	AC	15th	None	No
CP	SANFORD, DOUGLAS F.	P	0-666724	Capt.	01	AC	15th	None	No
N	MCCONNELL, GEORGE H.	N	0-2061012	2nd Lt.	18	AC	15th	None	No
B	STENBERG, MORTON I.	B	0-776821	2nd Lt.	18	AC	15th	None	No
E	Deleo, Dominick J.	E	32896711	S/Sgt	38	AC	15th	None	No
R	Smith, George (NMI)	R	37611291	Sgt	38	AC	15th	None	No
G	Delucia, Paul R.	G	33681428	Sgt	38	AC	15th	None	No
G	Mayer, William H.	G	38113142	Sgt	38	AC	15th	None	No

(20) Custer Robert E. (21) 0-667805 (22) 1st Lt. (23) 01 (24) Air Corps  
 (Last name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Serial number) (Rank) (Personnel class) (Branch)  
 Assigned (25) 15th (26) 451st (27) 724th (28) Castelluccio AF  
 (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) 12-12-42 Present rating (35) Pilot (36) 12-12-42 Instrument rating (37) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Rating) (Date) (Rating) (Date) (Date)

First Pilot Hours:  
 (at the time of this accident)  
 (38) This type 107.10 (39) Instrument time last 6 months \_\_\_\_\_  
 (40) This model 107.10 (41) Instrument time last 30 days \_\_\_\_\_  
 (42) Last 90 days 107.50 (42) Night time last 6 months \_\_\_\_\_  
 (43) Total 107.40 (43) Night time last 30 days \_\_\_\_\_

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

DAMAGE	(46) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(46) Aircraft <u>3</u>	Damaged left wing and aileron
(47) Engine(s) <u>1</u>	
(48) Propeller(s) <u>1</u>	

(50) Weather at the time of accident CAVU  
 (51) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident No  
 (52) Cleared from Castelluccio AF (53) To Castelluccio AF (54) Kind of clearance Training  
 (55) Pilot's mission TRAINING  
 (56) Nature of accident #4 Prop of wing ship hit left wing during a practice formation flight  
 (57) Cause of accident Flying formation to close  
 (58) No.



DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

Aircraft was flying as lead ship on a practice formation flight when the left wing ship's #4 prop chewed into the left wing of the lead ship.

RESPONSIBILITY

100% Pilot Error of Lt Sieber flying  
Aircraft number 42-51314

*James B. Knapp*  
 JAMES B. KNAPP,  
 Lt. Col., Air Corps,  
 Commanding.

*Robert E. Applegate*  
 ROBERT E. APPLIGATE,  
 Lt. Col., Air Corps,

*Charles L. Wagner*  
 CHARLES L. WAGNER,  
 Major, Medical Corps,

*Robert H. Lomanus, Jr.*  
 WILLIAM H. LOMANUS, JR.,  
 Major, Air Corps,

*Edward L. Wilson, Jr.*  
 EDWARD L. WILSON, JR.,  
 Major, Air Corps,  
 Aircraft Accident Officer.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



724TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)  
Office of the Operations Officer  
APO #520 U. S. Army

29 October 1944

SUBJECT: Accident Statement on B-24J Airplane, No. 42-51314,  
on 24 October 1944.

TO : Whom It May Concern.

1. On 24 October 1944, Captain Sanford and myself were flying aircraft #42-51589 as lead ship in the low, or #3 flight.

2. Approximately 1130 o'clock the formation was descending from 20,000 feet on a course of about 265°. At this time, we were making a slight turn to the left to slide out into position. My eyes were on the group lead and we had established our turn, and were turning for approximately 15 seconds, when I felt the aileron control tremble and the ship lurch to the left slightly. I glanced out of the left pilot's window to see the #4 engine of the left wingman chewing into the rear section of our left wing. Both Captain Sanford and myself, pushed forward on the controls to clear ourselves from the other aircraft.

3. The crew was prepared to bail out and the engineer and top turret gunner examined the wing visually and reported the extent of the damage to us. The ship showed no dangerous characteristics other than the necessity for right aileron and left rudder trim.

4. I was at the controls, from the pilots seat, at the time of the accident and Capt. Sanford was acting as co-pilot. I let down to 2000 feet, at which time Capt. Sanford took control and made an excellent landing. The left wing seemed to stall out about five miles per hour faster than the right due to the damage.

5. No injuries resulted.

  
ROBERT E. CUSTER  
1st Lt., Air Corps  
pilot



784TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)  
Office of the Operations Officer  
APO #520 U. S. Army

30 October 1944

SUBJECT: Accident Statement on B-24J Airplane, No. 42-51589,  
on 24 October 1944.

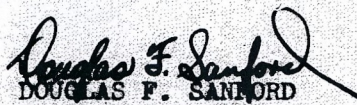
TO : Whom It May Concern.

1. Lt Custer and I were flying airplane #42-51589, leading the low flight of a group formation. Lt Custer was flying from the pilots seat and I was acting as his co-pilot. Airplane #42-51514, piloted by Lt Seiber was flying the #3 position.

2. The group was decending from 20,00 feet and at the time was in a turn to the left. Lt Custer started his turn with the leader and at the same time shifting to the center of the formation. We had been in our turn some 15 seconds when I felt the airplane shudder as if the tail was vibrating. Looking across the cockpit and out the pilot's window I saw the the No. 3 ship of our formation had slid in towards us, so that his right wing was overlapping ours, and the No. 4 prop was chewing into our left wing. Both Lt Custer and I shoved forward on the stick to get clear of the other ship and the formation. At the time of the accident we were approximatley 14,000 feet.

3. The crew was notified to put on their parachutes and stand by. The engineer was sent to the waist to see what damage had been done. Both the leading and trailing edge of the wing had been damaged, but the ship showed no unusual tendency other than a vibration of the aileron control, which became more noticable at speed over 160 and under 150. A normal landing was made keeping a slightly faster airspeed on the final approach than usual, as the damaged wing had a tendency to stall more quickly.

4. No injuries were incured on the ship in which I was riding.

  
DOUGLAS F. SANFORD  
Capt., Air Corps



MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

Station Investigating Accident - 451st Bombardment Group (H)

Place of Accident - Castelluccio Air Field, Italy - Plane Type - B-24J

Mission - Training - Date Accident - 24/Oct/44 - Time Accident - 1130

Manner of Occurrence and Probable Cause of Accident - Aircraft was flying as lead ship on a practice formation flight when the left wing ship's #4 prop chewed into the left wing of the lead ship.

Pilot Name - Custer, Robert E. - ASN - 0-667805 - Age - 23 - Rating - Pilot

Total Pilot Hours - 1703;45 - No. Previous Accidents - None - Date Last Physical Exam. - 14 July 1944 - History of Physical or Neuropsychic Defects - None

Copilot Name - Sanford, Douglas F. - ASN - 0-665724 - Age - 23 - Rating - Co-

pilot - Total Pilot Hours - 1685;55 - No. Previous Accidents - None - Date Last Physical Exam. - 12/Aug/44 - History of Physical or Neuropsychic Defects -

None - No. Persons in Plane - 8 - No. Persons Killed - 0 - No. Persons Injured - 0 - No. Persons not Injured - 8

Equipment Check: - Seats in Good Order? - Yes - Seat Belts Provided? - Yes -

How Many? - 2 - In Good Order? - Yes - Shoulder Harness Provided? - Yes - How Many? - 2 - In Good Order? - Yes - Parachutes Provided? - Yes - How Many? -

8 - Oxygen Equipment Provided? - Yes - Type - Demand - In Good Order? - Yes -

Special Safety Devices? - None - Material Factors Which Contributed to or

Prevented Injury? - #4 prop of wing ship hit left wing during a practice formation flight.

General Statement Regarding Accident Wing Recommendations - None

Date - 1 November 1944

GLYDE L. WAGNER  
Major, Medical Corps  
Group Flight Surgeon