

**UNRESTRICTED**

WAR DEPARTMENT  
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

Accident No. \_\_\_\_\_

3-27-45 119

**REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT**

87  
18164

(1) Place Castelluccio Air Field (2) Date 3-9-45 (3) Time 1816  
 AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model B-24H (5) A. F. No. 42-94908 (6) Station Castelluccio Air Field  
 Organization: (7) 15th AF (8) 451st Bomb Gr (9) 725th Bomb Sq.  
 (Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)

PERSONNEL LH

1169

DEPT (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	Worsthorn, Robert L.	P	0-820925	1st Lt	18	AC	15th	None	No
CH	Flint, Russell J.	P	0-826404	2nd Lt	18	AC	15th	None	No
N	Main, Bernard W.	N	T-134722	F/O	17	AC	15th	None	No
B	Dickey, Samuel L.	B	0-1540372	2nd Lt	18	AC	15th	None	No
E	Hoggard, William T.	EG	37375380	Cpl	38	AAF	15th	None	No
RO	Goss, Joseph I.	ROG	17075435	T/Sgt	38	AAF	15th	None	No
NG	Reilender, Paul E.	ANG	15375573	Cpl	38	AAF	15th	None	No
TG	Gaeth, Edgar W.	AAG	36892427	Cpl	38	AAF	15th	None	No
WG	Terhune, Richard T.	AAG	31421891	Cpl	38	AAF	15th	None	No
EG	Slackway, Harold G.	AG	33598423	Cpl	38	AAF	15th	None	No

(20) Worsthorn Robert L. (21) 0-820925 (22) 1st Lt (23) 18 (24) AC  
 (Last name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Serial number) (Rank) (Personal class) (Branch)  
 Assigned (25) 15th AF (26) 451st Bomb Gr (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) 1-7-44 Present rating (35) Pilot (36) 1-7-44 Instrument rating (37) 6-15-44  
 (Rating) (Date) (Rating) (Date) (Date) (Date)

First PILOT Hours: (at the time of this accident) OR - TO - 1  
 (38) This type B-24 284:40 (42) Instrument time last 6 months \_\_\_\_\_  
 (39) This model B-24H 65:30 (43) Instrument time last 30 days \_\_\_\_\_  
 (40) Last 90 days 67:05 (44) Night time last 6 months \_\_\_\_\_  
 (41) Total 696:00 (45) Night time last 30 days \_\_\_\_\_

props -

**AIRCRAFT DAMAGE**

NR

DAMAGE	(46) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(46) Aircraft	Complete wreck
(47) Engine(s)	Left outer wing panel, tip, and flaps of parked B-24.
(48) Propeller(s)	

(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

**IRB 12-17-23-80-82**

(57) Cause of accident Aircraft was not under sufficient control to avoid collision with damaged aircraft parked at edge of runway.

(58) No. \_\_\_\_\_ TO **RESTRICTED**  
 BY AUTHORITY OF \_\_\_\_\_

**UNRESTRICTED**



DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

NARRATIVE STATEMENT

Aircraft was returning from combat mission with bombs aboard. Accident occurred during landing at base during period of severe weather conditions, causing strong, gusty, crosswinds and slippery runway. All ships had been instructed by tower to land short because of slippery runway; however, this ship landed in the second third of runway, and attempts to get directional control were unsuccessful, resulting in collision with damaged aircraft parked at the edge of runway.

Several ships landing previously had cleared the damaged aircraft successfully. The aircraft landing just prior to this one had clipped the rudders off the parked aircraft however.

RESPONSIBILITY

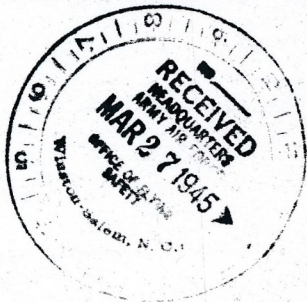
Pilot error in landing half way down runway and poor technique after landing - 60%.

Tower Officer error in permitting landings after two previous accidents, non use of red light and flares in forcing ship to go around when landing too long - 20%.

Extenuating circumstances, severe crosswind, slippery runway - 20%.

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 landings are again permitted. Go-arounds are mandatory if landing cannot be effected in first third of runway.



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

*Leroy L. Stefanowicz*  
LEROY L. STEFANOWICZ,  
Colonel, Air Corps,  
Commanding.

*John S. Hopcock*  
JOHN S. HOPPOCK,  
Lt. Colonel, Air Corps.

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

*Walter L. Wagner*  
WALTER L. WAGNER,  
Major, Medical Dpt.

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

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

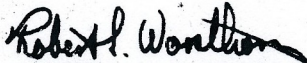
Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

11 March 1945.

S T A T E M E N T

On the 9th of March I was flying ship no. 40. When the Group returned from a mission a thunderstorm was over the field. When it came my turn to land I was told by the tower the field would be closed for 5 minutes. After the field was opened I was cleared no. 1 by the tower. No mention was made to me by the tower of two airplanes at the end of the runway. Due to very poor visibility on the approach I called the tower two or three times and was told I was no. 1 but to use caution as there was a cross wind. I landed ~~East~~ <sup>WEST TO EAST</sup> ~~to East~~ in what was I found out later almost a direct down wind. I had the plane on the ground when I saw the two planes off to one side of the runway when I applied brakes I started skidding into plane no. 62. I tried to avoid the crash by applying left brake and putting full power to no. 3 and 4 engines although the ship finally did ground loop. The wing of 62 caught 40 in the rear end and broke it in two.

  
ROBERT L. WORSTHORN  
1st Lt., AC  
Pilot



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

11 March 1945.

S T A T E M E N T

Returning from a Combat Mission on March 9th the field was closed when it was our turn to land. Five minutes later we were given permission to land but was cautioned because the runway was slippery from a recent thunderstorm. We called the tower several times to make sure we were clear to land and the tower said we were. After landing we saw two aircraft about three quarters of the way down the runway just off the side so we tried to stop our aircraft. Upon applying the brakes we skidded and headed straight for one of the aircraft. To keep from colliding we tried to ground loop the plane to the left, which resulted in our tail section ramming the left wing of the stalled aircraft. Upon landing we found out we landed down wind for they changed the direction of landing afterwards.

*Russell J. Flint*  
RUSSELL J. FLINT  
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 6/10 to 8/10 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 30 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 #839 permission to land, which he did successfully.

As it was rapidly growing dark and the ships afloat 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 #466 made a successful landing.

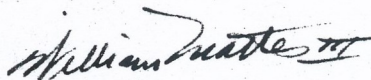
Ship #999 called in on the approach and was informed to land short, that the runway was slippery and that a ship was off the left side of it at the end. His landing was a little long, and I have been informed that his wing tip clipped the vertical fin of ship #372 as he passed him. This ship continued to the end of the runway and cleared it.



Ship #808 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 #372 as his ship came to rest.

Ships landed in the following order:

<u>SHIP NO.</u>	<u>TIME</u>
42-51372	1804
42-95236	1805
44-49839	1812
44-50466	1814
42-51999	1815
42-94908	1816



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

