

Accident No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Checked by \_\_\_\_\_  
Analyzed by \_\_\_\_\_  
Copied for Wright  
Field by \_\_\_\_\_  
Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

WAR DEPARTMENT  
A. A. F. FORM NO. 14  
(Revised May 16, 1942)

**RESTRICTED**

**RESTRICTED**  
WAR DEPARTMENT  
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

ACCIDENT NO.

A7

REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

(1) Place St. Michel, France (2) Date 2 December 1944 (3) Time 1310  
AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model B-26G5 (5) A. F. No. 43-34217 (6) Station A-74  
Organization: (7) 9th BD Ninth AF (8) 394th (M) (9) 587th (M)  
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)

PERSONNEL

| DUTY<br>(10) | NAME<br>(Last name first)<br>(11) | RATING | SERIAL NO. | RANK    | PERSONNEL CLASS | BRANCH    | AIR FORCE OR COMMAND | RESULT TO PERSONNEL | USE OF PARACHUTE |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|--------|------------|---------|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
|              |                                   | (12)   | (13)       | (14)    | (15)            | (16)      | (17)                 | (18)                | (19)             |
| P            | Knapp, Verner F.                  | P      | 0-691098   | 1st Lt. | 18              | Air Corps | Ninth AF             | None                | S                |
| GP           | Dean, William H.                  | P      | 0-814660   | 1st Lt. | 18              | Air Corps | Ninth AF             | None                | S                |
| B            | Sickies, John A.                  | B      | 0-712319   | 2nd Lt. | 18              | Air Corps | Ninth AF             | None                | S                |
| E            | Reily, Joseph W.                  | E      | 34154420   | S/Sgt.  | 38              | Air Corps | Ninth AF             | None                | S                |
| R            | Ferguson, John R.                 | R      | 13114949   | Sgt.    | 20              | Air Corps | Ninth AF             | None                | S                |
| G            | Conway, Carl F.                   | G      | 35604374   | S/Sgt.  | 38              | Air Corps | Ninth AF             | None                | S                |

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED OR CHANGED

TO CGAAF  
BY AUTHORITY OF J. E. C. DATE 1-22-46

RESTRICTED WITH AGGRESSION

(20) Knapp, Verner P. 0-691098 (21) 1st Lt. (22) 18 (23) Air Corps  
Signed (25) 9th BD Ninth AF (26) 394th (M) (27) 587th (M) (28) A-74  
Attached for flying (29) 9th BD Ninth AF (30) 394th (M) (31) 587th (M) (32) A-74  
Original rating (33) Pilot (34) 8 Aug. 43 Present rating (35) Pilot (36) 8 Aug. 43 Instrument rating (37) 18 Feb. 44

FIRST PILOT HOURS:  
(at the time of this accident)  
(38) This type..... 322:05 (42) Instrument time last 6 months..... 2:35  
(39) This model..... 17:50 (43) Instrument time last 30 days..... 1:10  
(40) Last 90 days..... 74:15 (44) Night time last 6 months..... 1:45  
(41) Total..... 785:00 (45) Night time last 30 days..... 145

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

| DAMAGE                     | (40) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| (46) Aircraft..... W       | Complete wreck             |
| (47) Engine(s)..... W W    |                            |
| (48) Propeller(s)..... W W |                            |

(50) Weather at the time of accident 10/10 clouds 300 ft. to 12000-14000 ft. icing above 8000 ft.  
Visibility 500 to 1000 ft. in rain and haze  
(51) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident Yes  
(52) Cleared from A-74 (53) To A-74 (54) Kind of clearance Operational  
(55) Pilot's mission Operational sortie  
(56) Nature of accident Aircraft abandoned in mid-air because of lack of fuel.  
(57) Cause of accident Aircraft were not diverted to an area having good weather conditions.  
Aircraft thereupon ran out of gas in search for airfield on which it could land.  
(58) Has form 54 submitted: No

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*Inspected 20-2-45*

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DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

Aircraft No. 43-34217 was a unit of a formation returning from the target area to home station. The home station was expected to have poor weather in cold frontal conditions and the formation was instructed at briefing they would be given a diversion airfield by higher command via radio channels. Contrary to expectations, this aircraft arrived over the home station at 11,000 ft. and circled the field while awaiting diversion instructions from higher command. Further flight in search of a diversion airfield resulted in encountering extremely bad weather conditions. Upon encountering icing conditions and seeing his fuel supply gone, the pilot ordered his crew to bail out. The entire crew abandoned ship successfully at 8,000 to 6,000 ft.

Responsibility for this accident is attributed to weather and the weather communications net.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is suggested that closer liaison and communications net be maintained for weather information available from continental weather stations located between this station and the Straits of Dover.



Signature *Albert L. Carter*  
ALBERT L. CARTER, Major, Air Corps.

*Robert A. Hale*  
ROBERT A. HALE, Captain, Air Corps.

*Lewis E. Martin*  
LEWIS E. MARTIN, Captain, Air Corps.

*Melvin W. Faulk*  
MELVIN W. FAULK, Captain, Air Corps.

10-8 December 1944

Hq SOS USAPPR-47/CSMC13350

CONFIDENTIAL

587TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H), ARMY AIR FORCE  
394th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M), USAF

VPM:hds

APO # 140 U S Army  
6 December 1944

SUBJECT: Abandon of B-26 Type Air-craft.

TO : Operations Officer, 394th Bombardment Group (M), AAF, APO # 140, U S Army.

1. On 2 December 1944 at approximately 1300 hours we were forced to abandon a B-26 type aircraft due to lack of fuel and extremely bad weather conditions.

2. Upon return from a mission over Germany we ran into bad weather conditions shortly after we left the target area. We had to return to our field area at an altitude of 11,000' to stay above the weather. We circled above the field at 11,000' for approximately forty-five (45) minutes waiting for instructions as to where to land. This consumed very much of our remaining fuel and we had about eight gallons of gas left when we decided to go down in hopes of finding a field.

3. We started down through the clouds where we picked up some ice with a report that we were to break out of the clouds at 2,000'. Upon reaching 2,000' we were still in very thick clouds and it was raining quite hard. We proceeded on down to 700' where it was still raining quite hard and were still in thick clouds. We were able to see a hill through a break in the clouds just in time to pull up and clear by about 20' at the most. This little incident was all we needed to convince us that to bail-out was the only thing left to do.

4. Immediately, we started our climb back up through the rain and thick clouds with only 30 gallons of fuel left in each engine. When we reached an altitude of 8,000' we started to pick up heavy ice and our right tank was on empty. The entire crew of six had their parachutes on by now, and were standing at the escape hatch waiting for the nose wheel to lower. The wheels were dropped at 9,000' feet and the six (6) of us were out of the plane in about a minute. The right engine cut entirely out just before the last man left and the plane started into a tight spiral to the right.

VERNER P. KRAMER,  
1st Lt. Air Corps,  
Pilot.

304th Bombardment Group (H) AAF

FORM 107

APO 140  
8 December 1944  
U. S. Army

SUBJECT: Weather Factor in Aircraft Accidents 2 December 1944.

TO : Commanding Officer, Headquarters, 304th Bombardment Group (H) AAF.

1. Bomber Division Operational Forecast called for front to be in Eastern Base area or near Base at E.T.P. of aircraft. 304th Base being most Northernly could expect to be affected as quickly as any, due to Northeast to Southwest orientation of front moving toward the East. Our forecast at 304th was for front to reach Base area at 1100 hours, E.T.P. was 1115 hours, so crews were briefed on frontal conditions in and just past Base area on return, with cloud base 1,000 feet, tops 10,000 to 14,000 feet, and visibility 1 to 2 miles in rain. This was the weather reported along front in the British Isles. However, cloud base and visibility were considerably lower in frontal zone in this area. Bomber Division was well aware of risk having to return to frontal weather and suggested letting down to East and returning beneath. Area to East of Rains was pointed out at briefing as likely diversion area, and crews were told Bomber Division was aware of risk and would divert if necessary.

2. When the Weather Officer saw the decision was to go in spite of the risk, he phoned 95th Fltn Weather, and expressed his concern, and forecast time of arrival of front. Spare aircraft returned and landed at Base at approximately 1100 hours. Ceiling was then 2,000 feet, and visibility 3 to 4 miles. Weather Officer met pilot at aircraft to obtain weather information on return. Pilot reported clouds on deck 50 to 70 miles East of Base enroute from target, with tops to 12,000 to 14,000 feet. Moderate clear icing was forecast and encountered in cloud above 8,000 feet. During the few minutes spent in obtaining this information, and reaching telephones, our ceiling had dropped to 1,000 to 800 feet, and visibility to 1 mile and was lowering. The Weather Officer phoned the Control Tower on direct line, and Bracket through the switch board, notifying both of conditions and that field was expected to close, a diversion air base was requested at that time, approximately 1105 hours. Bracket had Bomber Division Weather on phone at same time, relaying requests and information to them. Leon (A-69) was given as a diversion and a flash observation showed 2,000 foot ceiling, and 2 to 3 miles visibility at approximately 1100 hours. This information was relayed on to 304th Flt Control. I expressed my opinion that A-69 would close in before our aircraft could be landed there, and requested further diversion to the Southeast. This was relayed on to Bomber Division who was to set up diversion.

3. Our Group was six minutes late over target, and lost a few more minutes letting down to come under cloud to South-East of Base, and finding it on the hills 50 to 70 miles from Base, forcing them to climb back on top. Our Base weather became 300 to 500 feet overcast, tops of cloud 12,000 to 14,000 feet, with visibility 500 to 1,000 yards in light rain and haze at 1115 hours, and similar weather was encountered at A-69 by the time the diverted aircraft reached the airfield.

*David R. Chambers*  
DAVID R. CHAMBERS,  
Capt. Air Corps,  
Group Weather Officer.

