

NAME OF PILOT

TYPE OF PLANE

ACCIDENT NUMBER

Ratchiff, Robert G.

B-17 G.

45-7-8-584

CHARGED TO:

OUT

IN

CHARGED TO:

OUT

IN

CHARGED TO:

OUT

IN

Photo - A.T.C.

9/25 10-8

Accident No.

45-7-8-504

Date

Checked by

JM

8-22-44

Analyzed by

Copied for Wright

Field by

Notes

photostat copy made

ATC 10/5/45 - B...

1225:9-43

427

RESTRICTED
WAR DEPARTMENT

ACCIDENT No. 24

U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT
AAF STATION 153

Cablegram 24
45-7-8-501
8
2307

TOWYN, *01-19-50*
(1) Place MERIONETHSHIRE, NORTH WALES. (2) Date 8 JULY 1944 (3) Time 8
AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model B-17G (5) A. F. No. 42-31321 (6) Station AAF STATION 153
Organization: (7) EIGHTH AF (8) 390TH (H) (9) 569TH BOMB (H)
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)

PERSONNEL

| DUTY | NAME (Last name first) | RATING | SERIAL NO. | RANK | PERSONNEL CLASS | BRANCH | AIR FORCE OR COMMAND | RESULT TO PERSONNEL | USE OF PARACHUTE |
|--------|------------------------|--------|------------|---------|-----------------|--------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) | (14) | (15) | (16) | (17) | (18) | (19) |
| 01 P | RATCLIFFE, ROBERT G. | P | 0-756318 | 2ND LT. | 801 | AC | EIGHTH | NONE | NO |
| 04 CP | WALTERS, JOHN F. | P | 0-819225 | 2ND LT. | 810 | AC | EIGHTH | NONE | NO |
| 05 N | SWEENEY, DONALD J. | N | 0-710311 | 2ND LT. | 810 | AC | EIGHTH | NONE | NO |
| 06 TOG | MARSTON, CHARLES J. | AG | 17166975 | S/SGT. | 810 | AC | EIGHTH | NONE | NO |
| 07 E | MILLER, JULES C. | E | 31537950 | T/SGT. | 810 | AC | EIGHTH | NONE | NO |
| 08 B | MARSH, JOHN A. | B | 16072795 | T/SGT. | 810 | AC | EIGHTH | NONE | NO |
| 09 BT | BARNDOLLAR, JAMES W. | AG | 33675393 | S/SGT. | 810 | AC | EIGHTH | NONE | NO |
| 10 RW | SCHUMACHER, RAYMOND J. | AR | 33672595 | S/SGT. | 810 | AC | EIGHTH | NONE | NO |
| 11 LW | RUBIN, ROBERT (NMI) | AE | 32628729 | S/SGT. | 810 | AC | EIGHTH | NONE | NO |
| 12 T | LUCEY, EDWIN F. | T | 32319921 | T/SGT. | 810 | AC | EIGHTH | NONE | NO |
| 13 X | WALL, CHESTER W. | X | 37118261 | T/SGT. | 810 | AC | FIGHTER | NONE | NO |
| 14 X | FOX, PAUL G. | X | 33179553 | S/SGT. | 810 | AC | FIGHTER | NONE | NO |
| 15 X | KOSMOSKI, MILTON | X | 16025163 | S/SGT. | 810 | AC | FIGHTER | NONE | NO |
| 16 | WAYDAK, JOSEPH S. | 127 | 36175155 | S/SGT. | 3820 | AC | FIGHTER | NONE | NO |
| 17 | KEHRER, HOWARD C. | | 15066195 | T/SGT. | 3820 | AC | FIGHTER | NONE | NO |
| 18 | RATCLIFFE, ROBERT G. | | 0-756318 | 2ND LT. | | | 18 | AC | |

Assigned (25) EIGHTH AF (26) 390TH (H) (27) 569TH BOMB (H) (28) AAF STATION 153
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)
Attached for flying (29) EIGHTH AF (30) 390TH (H) (31) 569TH BOMB (H) (32) AAF STATION 153
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)
Original rating (33) P (34) 1 OCT 43 Present rating (35) P (36) 1 OCT 43 Instrument rating (37) 22 JAN 44
(Rating) (Date) (Rating) (Date) (Date)

FIRST PILOT HOURS:
(At the time of this accident)
(38) This type 262:35 (42) Instrument time last 6 months
(39) This model 151:05 (43) Instrument time last 30 days
(40) Last 90 days 150:10 (44) Night time last 6 months
(41) Total ALL TYPES A/C 630:05 (45) Night time last 30 days

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

| DAMAGE | | (40) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|--|
| (46) Aircraft | <u>4</u> | | |
| (47) Engine(s) | <u>0 0 4 WS 0 4</u> | SEE PILOT'S STATEMENT. | |
| (48) Propeller(s) | <u>0 4 0 4 WS 0 4</u> | | |

(39) Weather at the time of accident 1/10 CLOUDS AT 3000 FEET, 20 MILES VISIBILITY.
(41) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident NO
(42) Cleared from CASABLANCA, FR. (43) To AAF STATION 153 (44) Kind of clearance FERRY
(45) Pilot's mission TO RETURN A/C 321 TO HOME STATION, WITH FIRST STOP IN ENGLAND AT ST. MAWGAN FIELD.
(46) Nature of accident A/C OVERRAN SHORT RAF GRASS FIELD AND WAS EXTENSIVELY DAMAGED WHEN IT WENT OVER A RR TRACK AND THEN HIT AN AIR RAID SHELTER.
(47) Cause of accident A/C WAS 100 MILES OFF COURSE AND LOW ON GAS, SO PILOT LANDED AT FIRST FIELD SEEN, WHICH WAS TOO SHORT.
(48) AAF FORM 51, UNSATISFACTORY REPORT, HAS NOT BEEN SUBMITTED.

RESTRICTED

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DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

1. AIRCRAFT L2-31321 TOOK OFF FROM CASABLANCA ON 8 JULY 1944, DESTINATION ST. MAWGAN FIELD AT LANDS END, ENGLAND. DUE TO POOR NAVIGATION AND WIND CHANGE, THE SHIP WAS 100 MILES OFF COURSE WHEN IT REACHED THE ISLES AND CAME IN OVER SOUTH WALES. GAS WAS VERY LOW AND AS THE SHIP WAS OVER MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN, THEY CIRCLED THE FIRST FIELD AVAILABLE INLAND, WHICH WAS A GRASS R.A.F. FIELD AT MERIONETHSHIRE, NORTH WALES. THE FIELD WAS ONLY 1800 FEET LONG, UNFIT FOR HEAVY AIRCRAFT, AND ALTHOUGH THE LANDING WAS ACCOMPLISHED, THE AIRCRAFT ROLL CARRIED IT OFF THE END OF THE FIELD OVER A RAILROAD TRACK AND ON TOP OF AN AIR RAID SHELTER. DAMAGE WAS EXTENSIVE, DESTROYING THE # 2 ENGINE AND WING. THE AIRPLANE WAS SALVAGED. NO ONE WAS INJURED, BUT IT IS CLAIMED DAMAGE WAS DONE TO THE RAILROAD TRACK.

2. STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY:

OTHER PERSONNEL (NAVIGATOR) ERROR - 50%.
PILOT ERROR - 50%.

OTHER PERSONNEL (NAVIGATOR) ERROR IN BEING OFF COURSE, NOT PROPERLY IDENTIFYING HIMSELF, AND POOR USE OF RADIO COMPASS.
PILOT ERROR IN NOT HAVING USED LOWER THROTTLE SETTINGS THE LAST PART OF THE TRIP TO GET MORE RANGE OUT OF HIS AIRCRAFT.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS: NONE.

EXHIBIT: "A"-COMP AUTH, S.O. 126, AAF STA 153,
23 MAY 1944.

"B"-CERTIFICATE OF PILOT.

"C"-CERTIFICATE OF CO-PILOT.

"D"-STATEMENT OF ENGINEER.

"E"-AAF FORM 1.

"F"-PHOTOGRAPHS.

Robert O. Good
ROBERT O. GOOD,
LT. COL., AIR CORPS,
PRESIDENT.

Joseph W. Gemmill
JOSEPH W. GEMMILL,
LT. COL., AIR CORPS,
MEMBER.

Ray Armstrong
RAY ARMSTRONG,
LT. COL., AIR CORPS,
RECORDER.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS:

Julius Zelman
JULIUS (W. I.) ZELMAN,
MAJOR, MEDICAL CORPS,
STATION SURGEON.

Waldo E. Harrell
WALDO E. HARRELL,
MAJOR, AIR CORPS,
GROUP S-2.



Signature _____

(Investigating Officer)

Date 26 JULY 1944.

RESTRICTED

7-8-44

DATE

153

STATION

390TH BOMB (H)

GROUP NO AND TYPE

B-17G

AIRCRAFT MODEL

T/SGT. J.C. MILLER

CREW CHIEF OR AERIAL ENGINEER

569TH BOMB (H)

SQUADRON NO AND TYPE

12-31321

AIRCRAFT SERIAL NO

| PERS. CLASS | - PRINT PLAINLY - | | USE AS DIRECTED LOCALLY | ALWAYS ENTER DUTY SYMBOLS. WHEN APPLICABLE, ENTER N - NIGHT OR I - INSTRUMENT. ENTER TIME FLOWN THEREUNDER | | | | | | | | FLIGHT DATA | |
|-------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|------------------|-----------------------|--|
| | NAME | RANK - ORGANIZATION | | DUTY | N OR I | DUTY | N OR I | DUTY | N OR I | DUTY | N OR I | TERMINALS AND MISSION | |
| 1 | 2 | | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | | 9 | | | |
| 18 | RATCLIFFE, R.G. | 2ND LT | | P | | | | | | | FROM: | | |
| | | | | 9:15 | : | : | : | : | : | : | CASABLANCA | 11:45 | |
| 18 | WALTERS, J.F. | 2ND LT | | CP | | | | | | | TO: | | |
| | | | | 9:15 | : | : | : | : | : | : | MERIONITHSHIRE | : | |
| 18 | SWEENEY, D.J. | 2ND LT | | N | | | | | | | MISSION: | NO. OF LANDINGS | |
| | | | | 9:15 | : | : | : | : | : | : | 1 | 21:00 | |
| 38 | MILLER, J.C. | T/SGT | | E | | | | | | | FROM: | | |
| | | | | 9:15 | : | : | : | : | : | : | TO: | | |
| 38 | MANFRIN, J.A. | T/SGT | | RO | | | | | | | MISSION: | NO. OF LANDINGS | |
| | | | | 9:15 | : | : | : | : | : | : | | | |
| 38 | BARNDOLLAR, J.W. | S/SGT | | BTG | | | | | | | FROM: | | |
| | | | | 9:15 | : | : | : | : | : | : | TO: | | |
| 38 | RUBIN, R. | S/SGT | | LWG | | | | | | | MISSION: | NO. OF LANDINGS | |
| | | | | 9:15 | : | : | : | : | : | : | | | |
| 38 | MARSTON, C.J. | S/SGT | | TOD | | | | | | | FROM: | | |
| | | | | 9:15 | : | : | : | : | : | : | TO: | | |
| 38 | SCHUMACHER, R.J.W. | S/SGT | | RWG | | | | | | | MISSION: | NO. OF LANDINGS | |
| | | | | 9:15 | : | : | : | : | : | : | A TRUE COPY: | | |
| 38 | LUCEY, E.F. | T/SGT. | | TG | | | | | | | FROM: | | |
| | | | | 9:15 | : | : | : | : | : | : | TO: | | |
| 38 | WALL, C.G. | T/SGT. | | X | | | | | | | MISSION: | NO. OF LANDINGS | |
| | | | | 9:15 | : | : | : | : | : | : | HAROLD F. SLOAT, | | |
| 38 | FOX, P.G. | S/SGT. | | X | | | | | | | MAJOR, AIR CORPS | | |
| | | | | 9:15 | : | : | : | : | : | : | FROM: | | |
| 38 | KOSPIGSKI, M.P. | S/SGT. | | X | | | | | | | TO: | | |
| | | | | 9:15 | : | : | : | : | : | : | MISSION: | NO. OF LANDINGS | |
| 38 | WAYDAK, J.S. | S/SGT | | X | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | 9:15 | : | : | : | : | : | : | | | |
| 38 | KEHRER, H.C. | T/SGT | | X | | | | | | | FROM: | | |
| | | | | 9:15 | : | : | : | : | : | : | TO: | | |

FLIGHT REPORT - OPERATION

RESTRICTED

OPER. CLERK

TRANSCRIBED: TOTAL FLIGHT TIME ENTERED ON FORM 1A

CREW CHIEF

TOTAL FLIGHT TIME

9:15

WARD DEPARTMENT
A. A. F.
FORM NO. 1
2-2-42

EXHIBIT "E"

RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS, 390TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
OFFICE OF THE OPERATIONS OFFICER
APO #559

E-1

21 JULY 1944

C E R T I F I C A T E

1. ON A FLIGHT, 8 JULY 1944, FROM CASABLANCA TO ST. MAWGAN FIELD AT LAND END ENGLAND, WE BECAME LOST AND WOUND UP IN SOUTHERN WALES. I STARTED SEARCHING FOR AN ALTERNATE FIELD, BUT WAS IN MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN AND COULD NOT LOCATE ONE. THE NAVIGATOR STILL THOUGHT WE WERE ON THE PENINSULA, KNOWN AS LANDS END AND THE FIELDS WE LOOKED FOR WERE NOT TO BE FOUND.

2. WITH THE GAS GAUGES READING ALMOST EMPTY, I CAME UPON A SMALL RAF FIELD. IT WAS A GRASS FIELD, 1800 FEET LONG. I SENT THE CREW INTO THE RADIO ROOM TO PREPARE FOR DITCHING. I LANDED THE SHIP AND IMMEDIATELY APPLIED BRAKES WHICH WOULD NOT HOLD ON THE GRASS. I THEN HAD THE CO-PILOT UNLOCK THE TAIL WHEEL AND TRIED TO GROUND-LOOP, BUT THE GRASS WOULD ONLY LET US SLIDE.

3. I STRAIGHTENED THE SHIP OUT WHEN I SAW WE WERE HEADED FOR A CONCRETE GUN EMPLACEMENT AND MISSED IT. THE SHIP WENT UP OVER A RAILROAD TRACK AT THE END OF THE FIELD AND LANDED ON TOP OF AN AIR RAID SHELTER.

4. THE #3 ENGINE CAUGHT FIRE AND WE RAN CLEAR OF THE SHIP. THE RAF THOUGHT WE HAD BOMBS ON BOARD AND DID NOT SEND A FIRE TRUCK. I RAN OVER TO THE HEADQUARTERS AND CALLED FOR A FIRE TRUCK, ASSURING THEM THAT IT WAS SAFE FOR THEM TO COME. THEY EVENTUALLY PUT OUT THE FIRE.

5. THE DAMAGE WAS #3 ENGINE DESTROYED, INNER WING PANEL DESTROYED, TWO FLAT TIRES, FUSELAGE SLIGHTLY DAMAGED, AND PROPS BENT, CHIN TURRET DAMAGED. THE SHIP WAS STRIPPED OF ALL ACCESSORIES WHICH WE BROUGHT BACK TO THE FIELD.

6. NO ONE WAS INJURED. NO CIVILIAN PROPERTY DAMAGED.

Robert G. Ratcliffe
ROBERT G. RATCLIFFE, 427
1ST LT., AIR CORPS,
PILOT.

1
RESTRICTED

EXHIBIT "B"

RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS, 390TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
OFFICE OF THE OPERATIONS OFFICER,
APO #559

E-1

21 JULY 1944

C E R T I F I C A T E

WE WERE FOLLOWING OUR RADIO COMPASS, LOOKING FOR OUR FIELD. WE NOTICED WE WERE IN THE COUNTAINS AND OUT GAS WAS VERY LOW, SO WE LOOKED FOR A FIELD TO LAND. WE KEPT TRANSFERRING GAS TO KEEP OUT ENGINES RUNNING. WE FINALLY SAW AN RAF FIELD AND DECIDED TO CHANCE A LANDING THERE, RATHER THAN CRASHING IN THE MOUNTAINS. WE CAME IN ON A NORMAL APPROACH, AND HIT IN THE FIRST THIRD OF THE RUNWAY. THE BRAKES WERE APPLIED, BUT THE FIELD WAS GRASS AND WE SLID ALONG JUST AS FAST. I UNLOCKED THE TAIL WHEEL TO GROUND-LOOP IT, BUT IT ONLY SLID SIDE-WAYS. AS WE CAME TO THE END OF THE FIELD, A GUN EMPLACEMENT LOOMED UP AND WE JUST GOT IT STRAIGHTENED IN TIME TO MISS IT. WE HIT A RAILROAD TRACK AND LANDED ON THE TOP OF AN AIR-RAID SHELTER. WE HAD RIPPED #3 ENGINE OFF AND IT BUCKLED UNDER THE WING, PIERCING THE OIL TANK, AND AN OIL FIRE RESULTED. THERE WAS NO GAS IN THE TANK, BECAUSE IT JUST FOLDED AND DID'NT EVEN BURN. WE DITCHED THE AIRPLANE WITHOUT ANYONE BEING HURT. THE GAS TANKS WERE CHECKED AFTER THE FIRE WAS PUT OUT, AND THERE WAS NO GAS IN ANY OF THE TANKS.

John F. Walters
JOHN F. WALTERS,
2ND LT., AIR CORPS,
CO-PILOT.

427

5-

RESTRICTED

EXHIBIT "C"

RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS, 390TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
OFFICE OF THE OPERATIONS OFFICER
APO #559

E-1

21 JULY 1944

S T A T E M E N T

WE WERE LOW ON GAS AND HAD TO FIND A FIELD TO LAND ON. THERE WERE NO FIELDS IN SIGHT AND WE DID'NT HAVE ENOUGH GAS TO LOOK ANY FURTHER. THE PILOT TOLD ME TO GET EVERYONE IN THE RADIO ROOM AND PREPARE TO DITCH. I GOT EVERYONE IN THE RADIO ROOM, AND WE ALL GOT SEATED AS BEST WE COULD. THERE WERE TWELVE ALL TOGETHER. THE PLANE CAME DOWN, EVERYONE WAS SET TO DITCH BUT WE NOTICED THAT THE WHEELS HAD HIT. THE PLANE GAVE A TURN TO THE LEFT AND THEN HIT A GAS SHELTER. THERE WAS A FIRE ON NUMBER THREE ENGINE, SO WE ALL GOT OUT AS FAST AS POSSIBLE, AS FAR AS ANY MECHANICAL FAILURES, THERE WERE NONE THAT I NOTICED. THE ONLY THING, WE WERE OUT OF GAS.

Jules C. Miller

JULES C. MILLER,
T/SGT., AIR CORPS, O/
ENGINEER.

427

RESTRICTED

EXHIBIT "D"

RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS
AAF STATION 153

23 May 1944

SPECIAL ORDERS)

NUMBER 126)

EXTRACT

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4. A Station Aircraft Accident Committee is to succeed Station Aircraft Accident Committee and per par 1 SO 98, this HQ dd 23 Apr 1944. (Auth: AAF Regs 62-14, dd 26 May 1942 and 62-14A, dd 2 Jan 1944)

Staff for the Committee

| | | | |
|---------------|----|---------|-----------------|
| LT COL ROBERT | AC | 0385401 | Aaft Accident O |
| LT COL GEORGE | AC | 0409662 | |
| MAJ JOSEPH | AC | 0427495 | |
| MAJ RAY | AC | 0431107 | |

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By order of Colonel OBT :

DONALD G. GREEN,
Lt Col, Air Corps,
Ground Executive.

OFFICIAL:

R.A. Blunsdel
 ROBERT A. BLUNSDEN,
 Major, Air Corps,
 Adjutant.

427

-7-

RESTRICTED

EXHIBIT "A"

11215



51.1

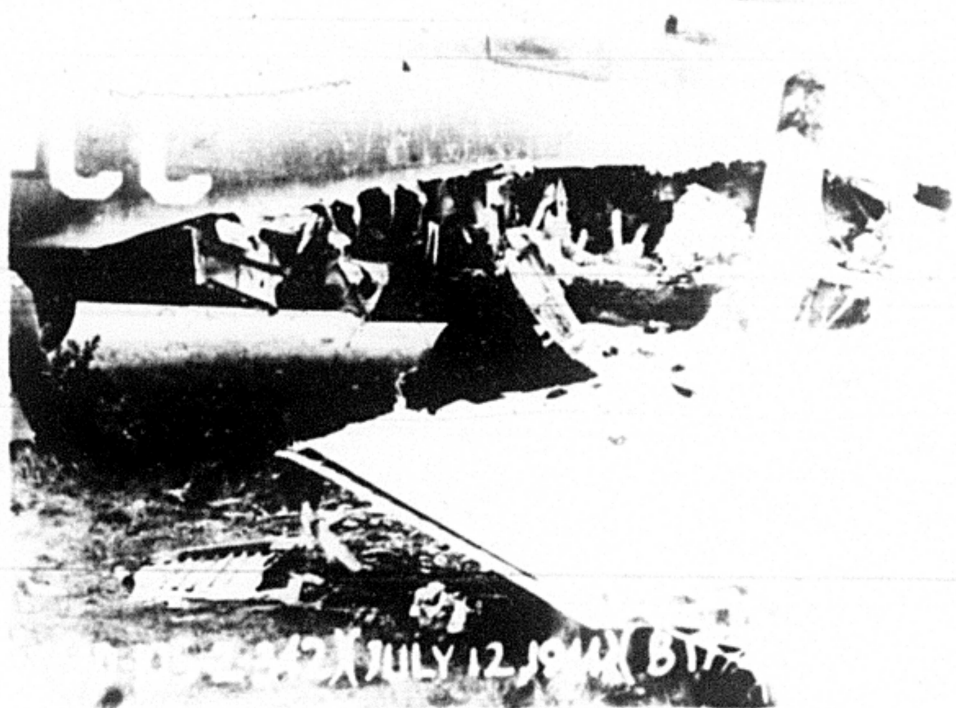
RESTRICTED





RESTRICTED



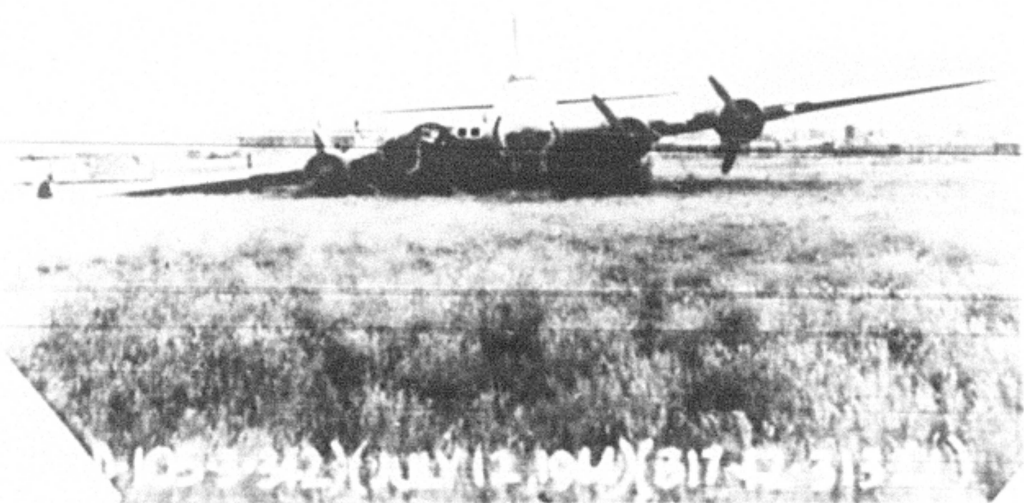
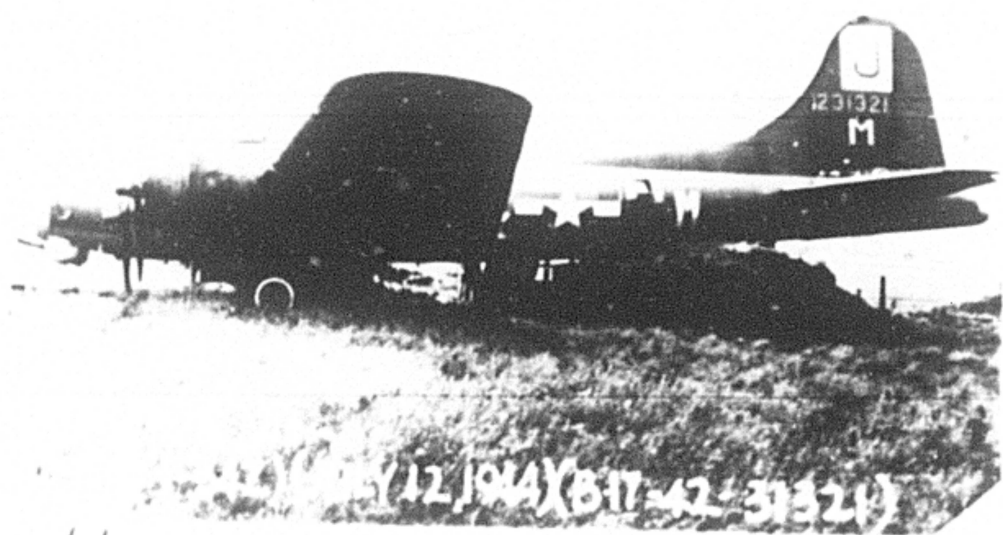


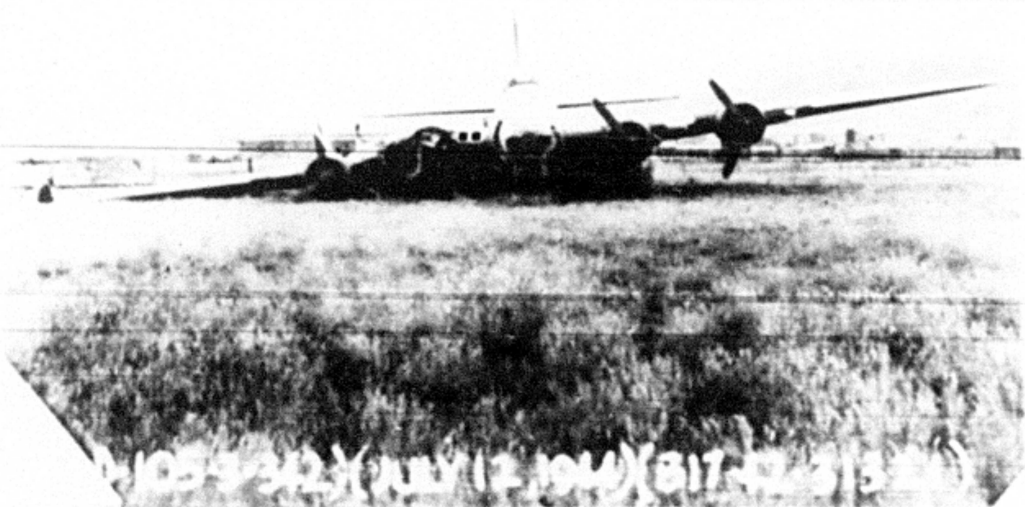
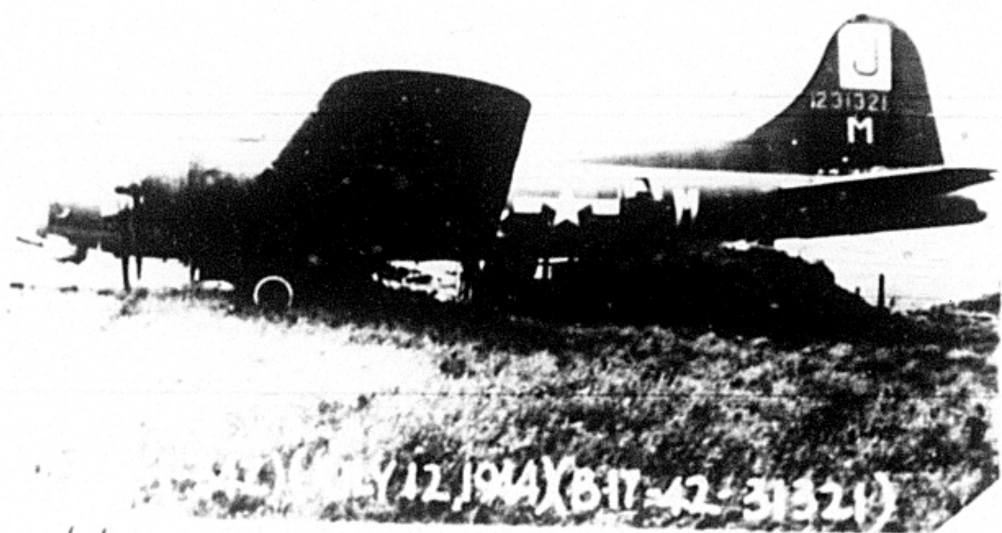
105-4342 (JULY 12, 1944) (617-4231321)

RESTRICTED



105-4342 (JULY 12, 1944) (617-4231321)







(1053342) (JULY 12, 1944) (817-42-31321)



(1053342) (JULY 12, 1944) (817-42-31321)