

ARMY AIR FORCES

REPORT OF MAJOR ACCIDENT

SUPPLEMENTAL

Use this form in accordance with AAF Reg. 83-14 and "Aircraft Accident Investigation Handbook" issued by Office of Flying Safety, Headquarters, AAF.

Fill in all spaces except where otherwise indicated.

If additional space is needed, use additional sheet(s) and identify by proper letter and submission number.

It is to be filled out by the Commanding Officer of the aircraft involved.

Section A - GENERAL INFORMATION

Place of Accident - State, County, nearest Town, Distance and Direction from Base, 12 MI. N. 47° N. Lat 6° 48' E: Long - Bourg St. Maurice, France		Nearest Army Airfield, Distance and Direction from Base, Istres, France, 186 MI. NNE	
Was Occurrence With Other Aircraft?	AF No. of Aircraft Involved (File reports Form 14 for each aircraft)	Date	Month and Year
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		1 Nov 46	Approx 0840Z

Section B - AIRCRAFT

Aircraft No.	Type	Model	Serial	Home Station
43-39538	B	17	G	Hochborn Army Air Base, Germany
AF No. of Command	AF No. of Pilot	AF No. of Observer	AF No. of Navigator	AF No. of Engineer
USAFS	EATS	61st TCG	61st TCG	61st TCG
Date of Manufacture	Serial Number	Date Last Overhaul	Overhaul Due on	Overhaul Done on
1945	184.50	NONE	NONE	NONE

Section C - OPERATOR'S RECORD (To be filled out by operator)

First Name	First Name	Model Serial	Grade	Branch	AF No.	AF No.	AF No.
UPHAM	HUDSON	H	COL	AC	0-19467	H	36
AF No. of Command	AF No. of Pilot	AF No. of Observer	AF No. of Navigator	AF No. of Engineer	AF No. of Staff	AF No. of Traffic	AF No. of Other
USAFS	EATS	61st TCG	61st TCG	61st TCG	61st TCG	61st TCG	61st TCG
AF No. of Command	AF No. of Pilot	AF No. of Observer	AF No. of Navigator	AF No. of Engineer	AF No. of Staff	AF No. of Traffic	AF No. of Other
USAFS	EATS	61st TCG	61st TCG	61st TCG	61st TCG	61st TCG	61st TCG

Section D - OPERATOR'S RECORD (To be filled out by operator)

AF No. of Command	AF No. of Pilot	AF No. of Observer	AF No. of Navigator	AF No. of Engineer	AF No. of Staff	AF No. of Traffic	AF No. of Other
USAFS	EATS	61st TCG	61st TCG	61st TCG	61st TCG	61st TCG	61st TCG
AF No. of Command	AF No. of Pilot	AF No. of Observer	AF No. of Navigator	AF No. of Engineer	AF No. of Staff	AF No. of Traffic	AF No. of Other
USAFS	EATS	61st TCG	61st TCG	61st TCG	61st TCG	61st TCG	61st TCG

Section E - PERSONNEL INVOLVED (To be filled out by command)

NAME (Last Name First)	Type of Acc. (Fatal, Non-Fatal)	Serial No.	Grade and Branch of Service	AF No. of Command	AF No. of Pilot	AF No. of Observer	AF No. of Navigator	AF No. of Engineer	AF No. of Staff	AF No. of Traffic	AF No. of Other
Upham, Hudson H.	C	0-19467	Col. AC	-	Hq EATS, USAF	Fatal	X				
Fair, Ford L.	C	0-17029	Col. AC	-	Hq EATS, USAF	Fatal	X				
Cobb, Lawrence L.	P	0-24786	Maj. AC	-	Hq EATS, USAF	Fatal	X				
Remirez, Alfred D.	H	0-2062524	2nd Lt. AC	-	61st TCG, USAF	Fatal	X				
Gilbert, John R.	E	669631	M/Sgt. AC	-	61st TCG, USAF	Fatal	X				
Hilton, William A.	E	36515193	S/Sgt. AC	-	61st TCG, USAF	Fatal	X				
Debovich, Zolton J.	R	33635227	S/Sgt. AC	-	61st TCG, USAF	Fatal	X				
James, William S.	R	34699920	S/Sgt. AC	-	61st TCG, USAF	Fatal	X				

Section F-DAMAGE

Describe briefly the extent of the damage which occurred. (If no damage, write "None." If aircraft is missing, write "Missing." If aircraft was totally wrecked, so state)

1. TO AIRCRAFT

TOTALLY WRECKED

2. TO ENGINE

1. TOTALLY WRECKED

2. TOTALLY WRECKED

3. TOTALLY WRECKED

4. TOTALLY WRECKED

3. TO PROPELLER

1. " "

2. " "

3. " "

4. " "

4. TO PRIVATE PROPERTY (EXPLAIN ON ATTACHMENTS)

NONE

Section G-POWER PLANT FAILURE

(Use this section of the form if power plant failure was a contributing cause factor in the accident. This must be signed by engineering officer)

1. Duration of Failure Since Last Take-off

From

Minutes

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
2. Engine Model	R1820-97	R1820-97	R1820-97	R1820-97
3. Engine No.	SW 032261	SW 024553	SW 032441	SW 032260
4. Engine-Hours Since Last Major Overhaul	184,50	184,50	184,50	184,50
5. Depot or Sub-Depot Performing Overhaul	New	New	New	New
6. Total Engine-Hours	184,50	184,50	184,50	184,50
7. Propeller Model	Hamilton Hydraulic	Hamilton Hydraulic	Hamilton Hydraulic	Hamilton Hydraulic
8. Propeller-Hours Since Major Overhaul	184,50	184,50	184,50	184,50

9. Statement of Observer, if available, on Behavior of Power Plant and Maintenance or Overhaul Immediately Before Failure

UNKNOWN

10. Statement of Engineering Officer, Mechanic, and Others as to What Failed and Probable Reason Why

NOT APPLICABLE

11. Ground Rating of Fuel

Engineering Officer (Name, Grade, and Station)

Section H-AIRFRAME, LANDING GEAR, OR OTHER PARTS

(Use this section if material failure was a contributing cause factor in the accident. This must be signed by engineering officer)

1. Describe the Material Failure, Including Statement of Kind of Failure at Time of Failure and All Factors Which Might Have Contributed Toward the Failure

1. UNKNOWN

Engineering Officer
(Name, Grade, and Station)

Section I-SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

(Use this section if special equipment—compasses, radio, signaling, oxygen equipment, fire extinguishers, etc.—was a contributing cause factor in the accident for any reason including failure, misuse, or by reason of not being in the plane)

1. Describe How the Special Equipment Contributed to the Accident or to the Reason

UNKNOWN

Section K—AIRPORT AND FACILITIES AND AIRWAY

(Use this section if the airport or its facilities or airway facilities were a contributing factor in the accident, other than those of runway, condition, or poor maintenance)

1. EXPLAIN

NOT APPLICABLE

Section K—WEATHER (This must be signed by weather officer of the reporting station)

1. WHAT WAS THE WEATHER AT THE TIME AND PLACE OF THE ACCIDENT?

1. Probable overcast at flight level.

2. IF WEATHER WAS A FACTOR IN THE ACCIDENT, STATE HOW AND ATTACH COPY OF WEATHER REPORT. 3. FURTHER SYNOPTIC MAPS OF THE TIME OF THE CRASH WHICH WERE SUBMITTED BY THIS OFFICER ARE NOT AVAILABLE FOR FURTHER STUDY. THEREFORE THIS OFFICER CAN MAKE ONLY THE FOLLOWING ASSUMPTION. WEATHER IN THE HOUR OF 10/10 OVERCAST AT FLIGHT LEVEL PROBABLY EXISTED WITH THE FLOW PRESENT. THIS IS PARTIALLY SUBSTANTIATED BY THE FRANK WEATHER OBSERVATIONS MADE AT BOURG ST MAURICE APPROXIMATELY 15 MILES SSW OF THE SCENE OF CRASH.

WEATHER OFFICER
(Name, Grade, and Station)



John C. Turner Capt. USAF - *Adapted from 2/10/50*

Section L—GENERAL INFORMATION

1. IF PERSON ON THE PART OF SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE OPERATOR WAS A FACTOR, STATE HOW

NOT APPLICABLE

2. WHAT WAS THE INCIDENT?

S - 2

3. DID THE CRASH OCCUR UNDER
CRASHED

☒ Yes ☐ No

4. WERE THERE ANY VIOLATIONS OF CODES OR REGULATIONS? (Explain)

UNKNOWN

5. DISCIPLINARY ACTION TAKEN OR CONTEMPLATED

NONE

6. KIND OF CLEARANCE (Attach Form 24)

IPR

FROM

Naples to Istres to Lyon to Paris

TO

Paris to Birmingham

ON LOCAL

STATION OF LAST DEPARTURE

Capodichino AirBase

Naples, Italy

7. DID YOUR FORM 54 HAS BEEN SUBMITTED ON ANY FEATURES INVOLVED IN THE ACCIDENT, GIVE UR NO.

NO.

DATE

EXPLAIN FULLY AND ATTACH COPY

NOT APPLICABLE

ARE COPIES OF AAF FORMS 1, 1A, ATTACHED HEREIN AS REQUIRED BY AAF REGULATION 22-145

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. ARE PHOTOS ATTACHED?

☐ Yes ☐ No

12-4822-1

On 1 November 1946, B-17 No 43-39338, pilot Colonel Hudson H. Upham, Headquarters EATS, departed Capodichino Air Base, Naples, Italy at 0054Z enroute to Bovingdon, England with eight (8) people on board. One radio contact was made with Capodichino tower five minutes after take-off. Nothing more was heard from this aircraft. After eighteen (18) days of extensive land, sea and air search, orders were issued to abandon formal search. Subsequently, numerous reports of aircraft wreckage were investigated in hopes that this aircraft would be located, but without success.

On 25 July 1947, a patrol of the 99th Bataillon D'Infanterie Alpine, French Army discovered the wreckage of an aircraft on a mountain named Aiguille des Glaciers, 45° 47' N. lat., 6° 48' E. long. The wreckage was discovered on a glacier at approximately 3750 meters (12,467 feet). This wreckage was positively identified as the remains of B-17 No 43-39338 by means of personal papers, operations orders, and parts of aircraft found at the scene of the crash. This particular mountain is approximately fifteen (15) miles southwest of Mount Blanc and is a part of the mass generally considered as Mount Blanc. (Mt. Blanc is the highest peak in Europe 15,761 feet). The wreckage was scattered over a wide area and only the lighter parts of the aircraft and equipment were found. It is believed that the heavier parts of the aircraft are buried in the glacier.

A few human remains were located but no positive identification was made. There was no indication that anyone had attempted to use parachutes. Personal articles were found that belonged to personnel who would normally be in the pilots compartment and other articles were discovered which would belong to personnel normally stationed in the rear compartment. Therefore it is believed that all eight people were on board the aircraft at the time of crash.

The aircraft flew head on into a nearly verticle face of the mountain. It exploded and was scattered over a wide area of the glacier below the point of impact which was about 450 feet from the top of the mountain. Judging from the point of impact the aircraft was flying on a heading of approximately 350° just prior to the crash.

The pilot filed a flight plan and was briefed to fly from Naples to Portofino, Corsica; to Istres, France; to Lyon, France; to Paris, France; to Bovingdon, England. The crash occurred at a point approximately 92 miles east of Lyons, France.

Although the weather over the Tyrrhenian Sea was forecasted to be very poor, the severity of the weather is not believed to have been a major cause factor because at the time of the crash the aircraft had already passed through the area of most severe forecasted weather.

None.

a. To preclude the possibility of pilots attempting to fly over the Alps, a directive has been published which requires aircraft of this command to fly via Lyon, and Istres, France, when flying to and from the Mediterranean area under IFR conditions.

b. All pilots of this command have been required to attend a one week flight planning course which stresses proper procedures for flying weather in this theater.

NAME		GRADE		ORGANIZATION	
Hudson H. Upham		Colonel		HQ EATS	
Bernard H. Peterson		Captain		HQ EATS	
Tom L. Johnson		Captain		HQ EATS	
James H. Barker		Major		HQ EATS	
Curt H. Barker		Major		HQ EATS	

Section M-DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

1. TELL IN NARRATIVE FORM, IN AS MUCH DETAIL AS NECESSARY, EVERYTHING THAT IS KNOWN ABOUT THE ACCIDENT. BE SURE TO COVER EVERYTHING THAT MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TOWARD THE ACCIDENT. INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO PREVENT SIMILAR ACCIDENTS, AND ACTION TAKEN

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No accurate and complete winds aloft information is available now as nearly all weather records covering the period of the accident have been destroyed or returned to the United States.

Assuming that the aircraft was in level flight prior to the crash, it is probable that a 10/10 overcast condition existed at the 12,000 level, the result of a warm moist easterly and southeasterly flow associated with the low pressure area centered over the Tyrrhenian Sea. This warm moist air having been forced up the southeastern slopes of the mountains probably caused a deck of clouds obscuring the mountains at the point of the crash.

In view of the lack of positive evidence no definite causes or conclusions may be stated. However, it is believed that the pilot was off course due to one of two reasons. First, he may have decided to fly direct from Naples to Bovington instead of the route shown on the Form 23 or, second, he may have been off course due to strong unforecasted westerly winds and faulty navigation.

NAME - PILOT <i>Colonel H. Upham</i>		NAME - MEMBER <i>Harold B. Peterson</i>		NAME - INDEPENDENT OFFICER <i>Tom E. Johnson</i>	
GRADE MAJOR	ORGANIZATION HQ EATS	GRADE Capt	ORGANIZATION HQ EATS	GRADE Capt	ORGANIZATION HQ EATS
NAME - MEMBER <i>James J. Harris</i>		NAME - MEDICAL OFFICER .		NAME - RECORDS <i>Robert B. Brunk</i>	
GRADE CAPT	ORGANIZATION HQ EATS	GRADE .	ORGANIZATION .	GRADE .	ORGANIZATION HQ EATS