

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This is the U.S. military report about the crash of an AT-7 aircraft on Mount Mendel Glacier on Nov. 18, 1942. Several pages have been removed because of redundancies. The report discusses the crash in as much detail as the military could find in the 1940s. The reproduction is dark because it was taken from microfilm.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR BASE

Office of the Commanding Officer

Hanno Field, Fresno, California

In reply refer to
000.93

(02)
17 December 1943

SUBJECT: Report of Aircraft Accident.

TO : Commanding Officer, Headquarters Flight Control Command, Army
Air Forces, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

1. Transmitted herewith in compliance with Army Air Forces Regulation
62-14, dated May 25, 1943 and 4th AF Memo 5-2, dated 16 May 1943, is a
report of Aircraft Accident Investigation Committee pertaining to B-24 D
airplane serial number 41-25163, plane unknown, 5 December 1943.

For the Commanding Officer:

OTTO C. VORHIESANO
Major, USA
Asst Adjutant

Incl 1 - Enclosed A.A.F. Form #11
Report of Aircraft Accident.

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WAR DEPARTMENT
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

(1) Place: Unknown (2) Date: 5 December 1943 (3) Time: Unknown
AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model: B-24 E (5) A. F. No.: 41-29463 (6) Station: Hammer Fld, Fresno, Calif.
Organization: (7) 4th Air Force (8) 461st BG (H) (9) 765th Bomb Sq. (H)

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	Curvey, Charles W.	P	02882921	2nd Lt.	1st Lt.	4th AGF	4th AGF	Unknown	Unknown
04	Hester, Robert W.	CP	0278822	2nd Lt.	1st Lt.	4th AGF	4th AGF	Unknown	Unknown
65	N. Cronin, William	P	0108119	2nd Lt.	1st Lt.	4th AGF	4th AGF	Unknown	Unknown
61	Fish, Ellis H.	P	0204217	2nd Lt.	1st Lt.	4th AGF	4th AGF	Unknown	Unknown
62	Burkey, Robert O.	P	0204217	2nd Lt.	1st Lt.	4th AGF	4th AGF	Unknown	Unknown
71	Wendland, John	P	0204217	2nd Lt.	1st Lt.	4th AGF	4th AGF	Unknown	Unknown

(20) Name: Charles W. Curvey (Last name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Serial number) (Rank) (Personnel class) (Branch) (Air Force or Command) (Result to Personnel) (Use of Parachute)
Assigned (25) 4th Air Force (26) 461st BG (H) (27) 765th Bomb Sq. (H) (28) Hammer Fld, Fresno, Calif.
Attached for flying (29) 4th Air Force (30) 461st BG (H) (31) 765th Bomb Sq. (H) (32) Hammer Fld, Fresno, Calif.
Original rating (33) Pilot (34) 7/26/43 (35) Present rating (36) Pilot (37) 7/26/43 (38) Instrument rating (39) 8 Aug. 1943

First Pilot Hours:
(40) This type: 259:30 (41) Instrument time last 6 months: 97:20
(42) This model: 259:30 (43) Instrument time last 30 days: 58:30
(44) Last 90 days: 150:30 (45) Night time last 6 months: 32:30
(46) Total: 613:20 (47) Night time last 30 days: 7:20

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

DAMAGE	(48) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(48) Aircraft: Unknown	Unknown
(49) Engine(s): Unknown	"
(50) Propeller(s): Unknown	"
(51) Weather at the time of accident: High broken & 4000! broken at destination, at 2TA cold front to north.	

(52) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident: No
(53) Cleared from Hammer Field To: Hammer Field
(54) Pilot's mission: Mission from Hammer Fld to Bakersfield, Calif., then to Tucson, Arizona and return to Hammer Field, California.
(55) Nature of accident: Aircraft missing and assumed lost.
(56) Cause of accident: Unknown

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

This airplane and all members of the crew are missing. The last radio contact was at 0210. The position reported at that time was fifty (50) miles east of Murco on a course of two hundred and eighty (280) degrees, altitude eighteen thousand five hundred (18,500) feet. No indication of mechanical trouble was mentioned. Weather reports for the route do not indicate unfavorable conditions over the Sierra Nevada Mts. However, reports from other pilots in the same area at the same time reveal turbulence and cloud patches over these mountains. The clearness is believed to have been more general north of the course and practically negligible over the route Murco-Bakersfield-Fresno. No indication of the cause or nature of the trouble can be determined definitely. It is probable that adverse weather conditions were encountered. It is also evident that action could have been taken to avoid unfavorable areas.

In the absence of knowledge concerning the location of the crash or landing, insufficient evidence is available to determine whether navigational or other personnel errors were the primary cause of the accident. The cause is therefore undetermined. It is the opinion of the Board that the weather was an underlying factor.

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Signature JOHN D. ROBERTS, Maj., AO, Pres.

HARRY L. MITCHELL, Maj., AO, Mem.

EDWARD W. SPALDING, 1st Lt., AO, Sec.

Date

REPLACEMENT PRINTING OFFICE 15-56747-1

Statement of 2nd Lt. John R. Specht, 765th Bomb Sq, 481st Bomb Gp.

16 December 1943.

The flight consisted of a night celestial from Hammer to Bakersfield to Tucson and return to Hammer Field. In briefing each pilot and navigator was given two (2) copies of the route weather forecast. They flew at their own altitude or the altitude for the flight was left up to the pilot to fill in. The Weather Forecaster predicted a front moving in from the northwest which would reach Hammer Field by 0300. The alternate base was Murco in case Hammer Field was closed in.

Question: You mentioned that on your flight, you expected it (the front) to be in about 0300. Was that information available to Lt. Turvey?

Answer: Yes, that was. It wasn't exactly 0300, it was between 0100 and 0400 and when he took off, your own Weather Forecaster (Hammer Field Weather Forecaster) gave us the 0300 o'clock time.

Question: Did you take off later than Lt. Turvey?

Answer: Yes, we took off about one (1) hour later.

Returning from San Diego that same evening, we encountered strong winds from the northwest at 12,000 feet and we were blown about forty (40) miles off course to the southeast.

Question: Were you in the vicinity of Murco and if so at what time.

Answer: We were over Murco at 0145 approximately. There was quite a bit of turbulence and a few high scattered clouds that we could see. It was dark to the northeast and we couldn't see what the weather conditions were over there.

When landing at Hammer at 0300, the Field was overcast and light rain at 3,000 feet. The cloud deck was about 2,000 to 3,000 feet thick at that time.

Outside of a few high scattered clouds, it was clear as far north as Hanford.

Question: Where there any instructions as to radio contact with range stations or group stations? Were they covered in the briefing?

Answer: As far as range station goes, it wasn't mentioned that particular night but every pilot knows about it. It has been covered before in the instructions.

Question: Any comments regarding the probable cause of the accident or comments that might pertain to it?

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Statement of 2nd Lt. John K. Specht, 765th Bomb Sq, 461st Bomb Gp (Cont'd)

Answer: This is just a statement that another pilot made to me that the compass radio in 463 was not in very good operating condition. For a celestial mission that could have been a very good reason for them to get quite a ways off the course without realizing it.

Question: Did your navigator estimate the velocity of the wind at 12,000 feet?

Answer: yes - 40 to 50 M.P.H. from 270° to 290°
AT 12000 ft.

John K. Specht

JOHN K. SPECHT,
2nd Lt., Air Corps,
765th Bomb Squadron,
461st Bomb Gp, Hammer Field.

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[illegible]

NOTE: DO NOT ATTEMPT TO FILL OUT THIS CARD WITHOUT FIRST BECOMING FAMILIAR WITH AF 605-60

(A) G. MARITAL STATUS AND DEPENDENTS: SINGLE ☒ MARRIED ☐ DIVORCED ☐ WIDOWER ☐ NUMBER OF DEPENDENTS: None

(B) LOCAL RESIDENCE AND ADDRESS: Greenview CITY: Greenview STATE: Ohio

(C) NAME: Mr. Charles William Turner RELATIONSHIP: Engineer STATE: Ohio

(D) TYPE OF EDUCATION: High School

(E) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(F) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(G) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(H) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(I) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(J) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(K) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(L) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(M) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(N) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(O) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(P) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(Q) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(R) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(S) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(T) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(U) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(V) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(W) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(X) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(Y) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(Z) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(AA) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(AB) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(AC) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(AD) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(AE) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(AF) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(AG) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(AH) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(AI) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(AJ) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(AK) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(AL) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(AM) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(AN) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(AO) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(AP) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

(AQ) SCHOOL: Greenview Ohio GRADE: 12 DATE: 1938

AF 605-60

461ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H), AAF
OFFICE OF THE GROUP SURGEON
HAMMER FIELD, PRESNO, CALIF.

12 December, 1943

SUBJECT: Informal report of aircraft accident.

TO:

1. Under the provisions of Memorandum 25-1, Headquarters Fourth Air Force, dated 18 November 1943, the following informal report of aircraft accident on 5 December, 1943 is submitted.

(a) *Flight 6-246, 46-47-33, was on a night navigation mission of approximately six hours and ten minutes duration which took off from Hammer Field, California at 06:50 to proceed to Bakersfield, California, Tucson, Arizona and return to Hammer Field, California. Estimated time of return was 03:00. Last position report was at 02:10 at 25 degrees 05 minutes North latitude, 116 degrees 50 minutes West longitude. Search missions to date has not located aircraft.*

(b) Pilot had flown 20 hours in the preceding 30 days and 8 hours in the immediate 48 hours and had approximately 8 hours sleep in the 24 hours before the flight. There has been no evidence of psychic aberrations, emotional disturbances or fear of flight. This pilot co-pilot team has been a very stable combination.

2. Results to flying personnel are as follows:

Pilot	2nd Lt. Charles W. Turvey	0-882921	Missing
Co-Pilot	2nd Lt. Robert M. Hunter	0-255544	Missing
Navigator	2nd Lt. William T. Cranin	0-694961	Missing
Bombardier	2nd Lt. Ellis E. Fish	0-752751	Missing
Engineer	S/Sgt. Robert C. Bussey	11684894	Missing
Radio Operator	Sgt. Howard A. Wandtke	15354978	Missing

Daniel E. Nathan
DANIEL E. NATHAN
Capt., M. C., AAF
Squadron Surgeon

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES

FOR ACTION

OFFICE OF FLYING SAFETY

FOR INFO

WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

FOR FILE

DATE 5 DECEMBER 43

X

T.W.X.

TELEGRAM

WSAL 351 V. ASYL 175 NR2 P

FROM KIRKSEY SQUAD HAMMERFIELD CALIF 060343Z

TO HQ US AIR ATTN DIRECTORATE OF FLYING SAFETY WINSTON-SALEM NC

PERIOD

IN COMPLIANCE WITH AAF MEMORANDUM SIXTY TWO DASH FOURTEEN THE
COLLECTING INFORMATION IS SUBMITTED ON MISSING AIRCRAFT COLON

DASH 245 41 DASH 28483 DEPARTED HAMMER FIELD ONA CALIFORNIA ZERO

THREE FIVE ZERO ONE DECEMBER FIFTH ONA NINETEEN FORTY THREE ON TRAINING

MISSION FROM THIS FIELD TO BAKERSFIELD CALIFORNIA THEN TO TUCSON ARIZONA

AND RETURN TO HAMMERFIELD PD PERSONNEL INVOLVED WERE COLON PILOT

SECOND LT CHARLES W TURVEY ONA NAUGHT DASH SIX EIGHT TWO NINE TWO ONE

CO DASH PILOT SECOND LT ROBERT W HESTER ONA NAUGHT DASH

SEVEN FIVE FIVE THREE FOUR FOUR ONA NAVIGATOR SECOND LT WILLIAM

W BROWN ONA NAUGHT DASH SIX NINE ONE NINE SIX ONE ONA BOMBARDIER

SECOND LT ELLIS W FLOYD ONA NAUGHT DASH SEVEN FIVE TWO

SEVEN ONE ONE ONA ENGINEER S SLANT SGT ROBERT D BURSEY ONA ONE ONE NAUGHT

EIGHT FOUR EIGHT NINE FOUR ONA AND RADIO OPERATOR SGT HOWARD A WAMETAK

ONA ONE FIVE THREE FIVE FOUR FIVE SEVEN NINE SIX PD THESE MEN WERE ASSIGNED

TO THE FOUR SIXTY FIRST BOMBARDMENT GROUP PAREN H PAREN ONA

SEVEN SIXTY FIFTH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON PAREN H PAREN ONA HAMMER FIELD

ONA FRESNO CALIFORNIA PD ESTIMATED TIME ON HOME WAS SIX

12 83 45

44-12-3-17

100-1-1-1

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES

FOR ACTION

OFFICE OF FLYING SAFETY

FOR INFO

WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

FOR FILE

DATE

TOW.X.

TELEGRAM

CONTINUED OF MESSAGE NR15 PAGE TWO.

HOURS AND TEN MINUTES PD LAST POSITION REPORT WAS RECEIVED AT NAUGHT
NINE ONE ZERO GOM CMA TWENTY FIVE DEGREES ZERO SIX MINUTES NORTH LATITUDE
CMA ONE HUNDRED SIXTEEN DEGREES FORTY MINUTES WEST LONGITUDE

PD MAKING GOOD TRUE COURSE TWO HUNDRED EIGHTY DEGREES PD PREVIOUSLY

THIS POSITION REPORT WAS NOT CORRECT BECAUSE IT WOULD PLACE SHIP APPROX-
IMATELY TWO HUNDRED FORTY MILES SOUTH OF GUADALUPE ISLAND HEADING WEST

PD THIRTY FIVE DEGREES ZERO SIX MINUTES NORTH LATITUDE CMA

ONE HUNDRED SIXTEEN DEGREES FIFTY MINUTES LATITUDE CMA

WOULD PUT THIS AIRCRAFT ON COURSE AND ON SCHEDULE FROM TUCSON ARIZONA
TO HAMMER FIELD CMA CALIFORNIA PD WEATHER OVER ROUTE WAS CLEAR

BECOMING HIGH SCATTERED FROM FIFTEEN THOUSAND TO TWENTY THOUSAND CMA

VISIBILITY UNLIMITED PD AIRCRAFT SEARCH IS BEING MADE TODAY AND WILL

CONTINUE AGAIN TOMORROW PD SEARCH IS BASED ON CORRECT POSITION REPORT

PD SIGNED GLANTZBERG CO 481ST BOMB GP PAREN H PAREN.

0647Z 01

NR15/ES.

(20)

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES

FOR ACTION

OFFICE OF FLYING SAFETY

FOR INFO

OFF NOCT

WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

FOR FILE

DATE 7 DECEMBER 43

1-11-X

TELEGRAM

WSAL 001 V ASVL 175 NR3 P

FROM KIRKSEY ODAAB HAMMERFLD CALIF 070412Z

TO CG US AAF ATTN DIRECTORATE OF FLYING SAFETY WINSTONSALEM NC

01229

FAB AQ259 PERIOD CITE FWX FAB AQ191 OMA NO 324E 41 DASH 28483

OMA 461ST BOMB GP PAREN R PAREN OMA HAMMER FIELD OMA FRESNO CALIFORNIA

PD TEN AIRCRAFT FROM HAMMER FIELD OMA FOUR AIRCRAFT FROM MURDOO ARMY

AIR BASE PARTICIPATED IN THE SEARCH FOR THE MISSING AIRCRAFT PD AREA

SEARCHED IS AS FOLLOWS COLON LINE RUNNING EAST FROM THIRTY SEVEN DEGREES

TEN MINUTES NORTH ONE HUNDRED NINETEEN DEGREES EIGHTEEN MINUTES WEST

TO THIRTY SEVEN DEGREES FIFTEEN MINUTES NORTH ONE HUNDRED SIXTEEN

DEGREES FORTY FIVE MINUTES WEST THEN SOUTH TO THIRTY FIVE DEGREES

FIVE MINUTES NORTH ONE HUNDRED SIXTEEN DEGREES FORTY FIVE MINUTES

WEST THEN WEST TO THIRTY DEGREES THREE MINUTES NORTH ONE HUNDRED

EIGHTEEN DEGREES FIFTY MINUTES WEST AND RETURNED NORTH TO STARTING

COORDINATE PD ON A LINE RUNNING NORTH EAST FROM THIRTY SIX DEGREES

FORTY EIGHT MINUTES NORTH ONE HUNDRED TWENTY ONE DEGREES TWENTY EIGHT

MINUTES WEST TO THIRTY SEVEN DEGREES FOUR MINUTES NORTH ONE HUNDRED

TWENTY ONE DEGREES TWO MINUTES WEST THEN SOUTH EAST TO THIRTY FIVE

DEGREES THREE MINUTES NORTH ONE HUNDRED NINETEEN DEGREES TWENTY FIVE

MINUTES WEST THEN WEST TO THIRTY FIVE DEGREES THREE MINUTES NORTH

ONE HUNDRED TWENTY DEGREES THREE MINUTES WEST THEN NORTH WEST TO

1231107

4/2/2 5 17

11-11-61

11

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NR14/RS1

0939Z GL K

FAHRI END

STARTING COORDINATE TO NEGATIVE REPORT OF THIS SEARCH WILL BE CONTINUED
TOMORROW TUESDAY DEC 7 43 PD SIGNED GLANTZBERG CO ASIST BB OF FAHRI H

CONTINUED OF HQS NR14 PAGE TWO

TELEGRAM

TELETYPE

DATE 7 DECEMBER 61

WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA FOR FILE M & B

OFFICE OF FLYING SAFETY FOR INFO. SEC. NIGHT

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR HORSES FOR ACTION A-10

BASE WEATHER STATION
Hammer Field
Fresno, California

RLA/srb

16 December 1943

SUBJECT: Aircraft Accident Report.

TO : Base Operations Officer, AAB, Hammer Field, Fresno, California.

1. The actual weather conditions for the flight of 2nd Lt. C. W. Turvey missing in a B-24 on 4-5 December 1943 are as follows:

a. The forecast given to the pilot is attached.

b. The sequences from 0630 to 0630 on 5 December 1943 for Las Vegas (LV), Silver Lake (RL), Daggett (DG), Tucson (TZ), Fresno (FR), Bishop (TBH), Independence (TIE), Maroo (DUC), Bakersfield (BD), and Sacramento (SZ), are attached.

2. The weather conditions along the return route from Tucson to Bakersfield were substantially as forecast. The winds at 20000' were 210 at 45mph. It is believed possible that an error in navigation could have been made in under compensating for these high winds. This would put them north of their route and the weather would be different from that forecast. For example, if the airplane deviated as far north as Mono Lake, the weather over the Sierra Nevada (to the west of Mono Lake) would be as follows: broken cumulus clouds; bases on the mountains, tops twenty to twenty-five thousand, visibility zero-zero in the clouds and 10 miles outside of clouds, moderate icing in clouds, moderate turbulence. These conditions were due to lifting caused by the Sierras and would not be severe on the eastern slope of the mountains.

S/T/ RICHARD L. MOORE,
Captain, Air Corps,
Station Weather Officer.

" A TRUE COPY

John C. Doherty
JOHN C. DOHERTY,
Major, Air Corps

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