

RESTRICTED

ACCIDENT No. _____

WAR DEPARTMENT
 STATION **A-55**
 U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

45-1-14-517

2-16-45

REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

(1) Place **2 miles north of Station A-55** (2) Date **14 January 1945** (3) Time **1017**
 AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model **A-26B-25** (5) A. E. No. **41-39333** (6) Station **A-55**
 Organization: (7) **9th BD - Ninth AF** (8) **416 Bomb (L)** (9) **669 Bomb (L)**
 (Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)

PERSONNEL

DUTY	NAME	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)
P	Van Meter, George O.	Pilot	0-759532	2nd Lt.	18	AC	Ninth AF	Fatal	None
G	Kiker, Charles M.	Gunner	12031996	Sgt.	38	AC	Ninth AF	Fatal	None

(20) **Van Meter George O.** (21) **0-759532** (22) **2nd Lt.** (23) **18** (24) **AC**
 (Last name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Serial number) (Rank) (Personnel class) (Branch)
 Assigned (25) **9th BD - Ninth AF** (26) **416 Bomb (L)** (27) **669 Bomb (L)** (28) **A-55**
 (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) **3/11/43** Present rating (35) **Pilot** (36) **3/11/43** Instrument rating (37) _____
 (Rating) (Date) (Rating) (Date) (Date)

FIRST PILOT HOURS:
 (at the time of this accident)

(38) This type **A-26** **58:35** (42) Instrument time last 6 months _____
 (39) This model **A-26B** **58:35** (43) Instrument time last 30 days _____
 (40) Last 90 days **58:35** (44) Night time last 6 months _____
 (41) Total **224:35** (45) Night time last 30 days _____

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OR

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

FIRE

Prop-2

DAMAGE	(49) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(46) Aircraft W 4	Aircraft exploded and burned.
(47) Engine(s) W 4 W 4	Aircraft exploded and burned.
(48) Propeller(s) W 4 W 4	Aircraft exploded and burned.

(50) Weather at the time of accident **Visibility 2200 yards, Overcast 1500-2000 feet.**

(51) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident **No**
 (52) Cleared from **Station A-55** (53) To **Station A-55** (54) Kind of clearance **Combat 0**

(55) Pilot's mission **Combat /**

(56) Nature of accident **Crash following take-off while in full flight.**

(57) Cause of accident **Undetermined.**

(58) Has the Form 54 been submitted? **No.**

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DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

NARRATIVE:

On the morning of 14 January 1945, Lt. Van Meter was taking off in aircraft A-26B-25, No. 41-39333 on an operational mission. Approximately one mile north of the runway, at an altitude of approximately four hundred feet, he went into a slow turn to the left and crashed. The aircraft exploded and both crew members were killed.

Because of poor visibility it was difficult for witnesses to determine exactly what happened. However, one witness who was at the end of the runway reported that he believed that engine failure occurred. This opinion is based upon sound alone, as no visible evidence of failure, such as smoke, was noticed. A thorough interrogation of all pilots in the same mission disclosed no evidence of wing or propeller icing. Only two pilots reported any evidence of carburetor icing.

Although there is a possibility that the plugs were fouled during the long interval of taxiing, the fact that no noticeable roughness occurred during the entire take-off run and the short period of climb, plus the fact that new spark plugs had been installed two flying hours previously to this flight, do not lend credence to this possibility.

There is also the possibility of failure due to detonation, failure of fuel pump, loss of oil, or mechanical failure of the engine. Although the left engine was badly damaged in the explosion it is being recovered. At the time of this writing a thorough investigation of the engine by the Pratt & Whitney representative is being conducted, and if any further findings having bearing on the accident are encountered, they will be forwarded immediately.

The control pedestal was found partially intact. Although cables had been broken and controls could have been moved, it is possible that the following positions of controls might be significant. The left throttle and left mixture controls were out all the way back, while the right throttle and right mixture controls were full forward in emergency positions. Both propeller pitch controls were cracked about one inch. In view of the inconclusive facts available, it is impossible to draw a positive conclusion as to the cause of this crash. However, it is the opinion of the investigating board that the left engine failed soon after take-off for undetermined reasons. Lt. Van Meter was evidently attempting to feather the failing engine and fly with his good engine when he crashed. It is the board's opinion that he was not executing a planned forced landing, but was attempting to continue flying.

No evidence of sabotage was obtained.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Unknown.

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

None.

INCLOSURES: 7

- Incl. #1 - Statement of Witness.
- Incl. #2 - Statement of Medical Officer.
- Incl. #3 - Interrogation of Pilots on Icing Conditions.
- Incl. #4 - Statement of Weather Officer.
- Incl. #5 - Statement of Engineering Officer.
- Incl. #6 - Statement of Crew Chief.
- Incl. #7 - Photographs.

Signature *Richard F. Shaffer*
 RICHARD F. SHAFFER, Capt., A.C.

William I. Mayo
 WILLIAM I. MAYO, Lt. Col., A.C.

Kenneth T. Roney
 KENNETH T. RONEY, Major, A.C.

APPROVED: *Theodore R. Aylesworth*
 THEODORE R. AYLESWORTH,
 Colonel, Air Corps,
 Commanding.

Date 18 January 1945.

INTERROGATION OF PILOTS ON ICING CONDITIONS ENCOUNTERED ON 14 JANUARY 1945

SQUADRON "A"

1. All pilots used carburetor heat before take-off. Some pilots used carburetor heat while taxiing. No loss of manifold pressure was experienced by any of the pilots.
2. No wing ice, propeller ice, or carburetor ice was encountered by any of the pilots during the take-off run.
3. One pilot throttled back quickly, after take-off, but no carburetor ice developed. No icing was experienced by any of the pilots during the flight.

SQUADRON "B"

1. Two pilots reported that they used carburetor heat prior to take-off. There was no indication of carburetor ice at any time.
2. The two pilots reporting encountered no carburetor ice, propeller ice, or wing ice during the take-off run.
3. One pilot reduced power slowly, but the other retarded the throttles as he would under normal conditions. No carburetor ice was experienced by either of these pilots. No carburetor heat was used during the mission, and no icing of any description was encountered during the flight.

SQUADRON "C"

1. Every pilot used carburetor heat prior to take-off. No pilot had any indication of carburetor ice.
2. No pilot experienced ice of any type during the take-off run.
3. Three pilots experienced slight carburetor ice immediately after take-off. Three pilots reduced power gradually. One pilot had to use nearly full power for take-off and climb. He was obliged to use carburetor heat to obtain sufficient manifold pressure for climbing. (This report is incomplete. The pilot, Lt. Musgrove, landed at another field and was not available for questioning. The information recorded here was reported by another pilot who had opportunity to speak to Lt. Musgrove at the alternate base.). One other pilot reported that it was necessary for him to use excessive power to climb and to maintain airspeed. No carburetor ice was encountered by any of the pilots in flight. Two pilots reported that it was necessary for them to use full carburetor heat for a short time at an altitude of 2,000 ft. in order to prevent carburetor ice. One pilot used sufficient carburetor heat throughout the flight to maintain a temperature above the freezing temperature of water.

SQUADRON "D"

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1. Two pilots of A-26 type aircraft used carburetor heat prior to take-off. They experienced loss of power immediately on taking off. One pilot did not use carburetor heat prior to take-off, because he was able to get at least 40° of

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manifold pressure when running up his engines. He experienced no loss of power on take-off. One pilot of an A-20 type aircraft did not use carburetor heat before take-off and did not experience any loss of power.

2. One A-20 pilot and one A-26 pilot reported a definite loss of power, due to carburetor ice. One A-20 pilot and one A-26 pilot encountered carburetor ice between 8,500 ft. and 10,000 ft. At 10,000 ft., one A-20 pilot noticed a definite loss of power due to carburetor ice. Both engines cut out at this altitude. The pilot used carburetor heat to clear carburetors, and in so doing lost the formation. No wing or propeller ice was encountered by the pilot. Very light rime ice was reported by some of the other pilots.

Harold A. Radetsky
HAROLD A. RADETSKY,
Lt. Col., Air Corps,
Operations Officer.

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671ST BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (L)
416TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)

APO 140, U S Army
17 January 1945

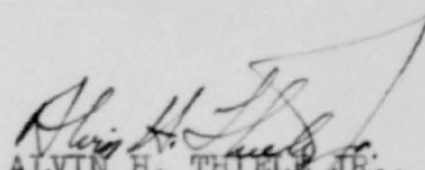
S T A T E M E N T

I certify that on 14 January 1945 I observed an aircraft accident in which airplane A-26B-25 serial number 41-39333 crashed and exploded shortly after take-off.

I further observed that the airplane made a full power take-off and cleared the runway and became airborne in the normal manner. After the airplane had proceeded in flight a few hundred feet and attained an altitude of what I assumed to be about 400 or 500 feet I heard one of the engines sputter. I could not determine which engine was causing trouble but it continued with what seemed full power for another estimated 300 or 400 feet. Then the engine popped and sputtered again, and very loud. Although I honestly believe the engine cut out I cannot be certain that it did. At any rate, one of the engines was causing trouble and from the sound was virtually useless.

I was observing all of this through a pair of binoculars from the time of take-off until the crash. The airplane did not gain any altitude after the second loud sputter. It slipped sideways instead and changed direction about 45° to the left. It was then that I assumed the left engine had given the trouble. The plane rapidly descended down at an estimated angle of 60°. I could not tell whether either of the propellers were feathered. I could not see the airplane crash because of a clump of trees which obstructed my view just before the airplane hit the ground.

Shortly after there was a huge column of flames and black smoke in the sky and the sound and concussion of the explosion.


ALVIN H. THIELE JR.,
Captain, Air Corps,
Engineering Officer.

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Incl. 1

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669TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (L)
Office of the Squadron Surgeon

M-B-5

APO #140, U. S. Army.
18 January 1945

C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that 2nd Lt. Van Meter, George O 759 532 was physically and psychologically fit for flying prior to fatal accident. He had not been taking any drugs or medicine to the undersigned knowledge.

Garland D. Murphy, Jr.
GARLAND D. MURPHY, Jr.,
Captain, Medical Corps,
Squadron Surgeon.

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Incl. 3.

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STATION WEATHER OFFICE
STATION A-55

APO 696, U. S. Army
17 January 1945

WEATHER STATEMENT

1. Aircraft A-26, No. 333, crashed shortly after mission take-off from Station A-55 at 1017 hours, 14 January 1945.
2. The weather conditions at the time of the accident were as follows:
10/10 low cloud, base 1500-2000 feet.
Visibility - 2200 yards in haze.
Surface Winds - 360° at 8-12 mph.
Temperature - 29°F Dew Point - 26°F
Relative Humidity - 66%
3. The weather conditions were not considered hazardous to normal take-off nor especially conducive to icing. As a precautionary measure, all pilots were briefed to turn on carburetor heat prior to take-off.
4. The Aircraft Accident Investigating Committee agreed that the weather conditions were not factors to the accident.

Henry W. Chidley
HENRY W. CHIDLEY
Capt., Air Corps
Station Weather Officer

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Ind. #5

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14 January 1945.

S T A T E M E N T

On the pre-flight inspection of A-26B-25 Airplane, AAF Serial Number 41-39333, on the morning of 14 January 1945, no defects were found. Neither engine was losing any appreciable RPM, and both engines were running smoothly. New spark plugs were installed two (2) flying hours previous to the crash.

At the completion of the pre-flight ground check, both wings, horizontal stabilizers and rudder were swept clean of frost. Kill frost solution was then sprayed on the wings to prevent further icing. The pilots windshield was clear when the pilot taxied out of the hardstand.

The pilot who flew the airplane when it crashed also flew its previous flight, the afternoon of 13 January 1945; when he returned the airplane was reported as "OK". On the morning of 14 January 1945, A-26B-25 Airplane, AAF Serial Number 41-39333 was ready for any mission.

Charles H. Stewart
CHARLES H. STEWART,
Captain, Air Corps,
Engineering Officer.

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Encl. #6

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14 January 1945.

S T A T E M E N T

On the morning of 14 January 1945 I accomplished the pre-flight inspection on A-26B-25 Airplane, AAF Series Number 41-39333. This inspection included a complete and thorough check of all instruments, engine controls and operation, and all flight controls. The magnetos on both engines were not losing any noticeable RPM. Everything was found to be in perfect working order.

After completion of the pre-flight inspection, frost was swept from the wings and horizontal stabilizers. An application of kill frost was then applied to the airplane. The airplane was then considered ready for any mission.

An acceptance inspection was completed approximately five (5) hours prior to it's crash on 14 January 1945 and no major defects were found. Minor defects found were corrected at this inspection. The spark plugs were changed approximately two (2) flying hours prior to it's crash. The airplane was considered to be in the best possible mechanical condition.

Marvin P. Winkle

MARVIN P. WINKLE,
T/Sgt., Air Corps,
Crew Chief.

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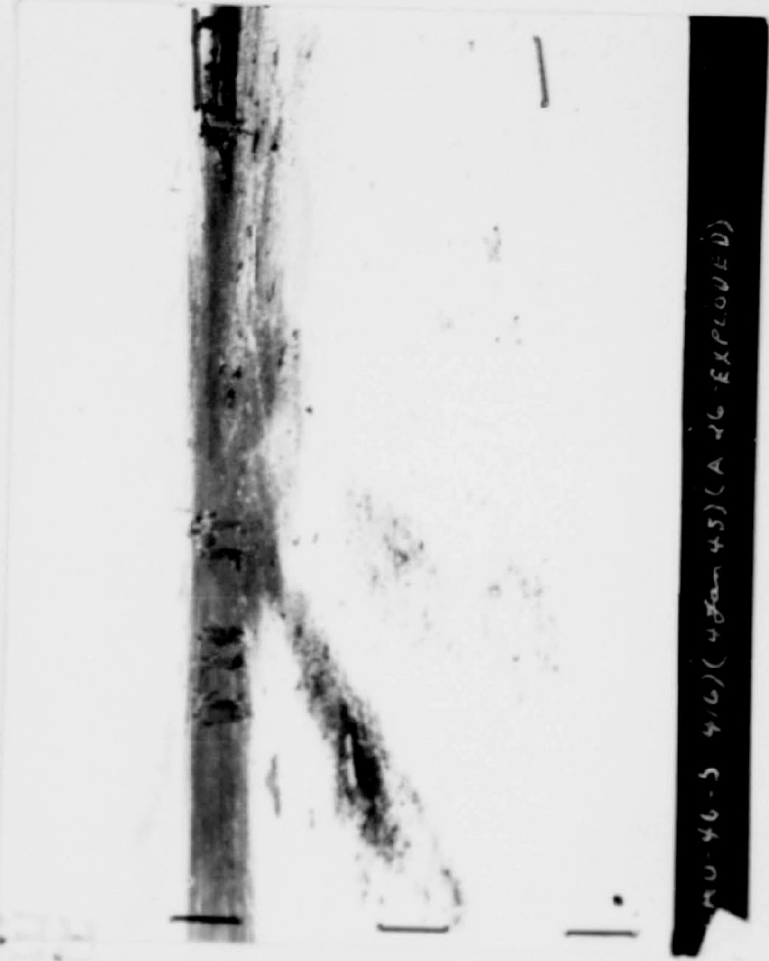
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MU-46-5 416 (48 Jan 45) (A 26 EXPLODED)

HEADQUARTERS
416TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)
Office of the Commanding Officer

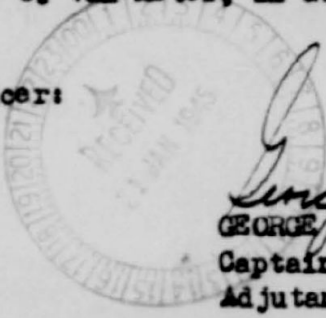
APO 140, U.S. Army,
19 January 1945.

SUBJECT: Transmittal of AAF Form 14.

TO : Commanding General, 9th Bombardment Division (M), APO 140, U.S. Army.

Transmitted herewith is AAF Form 14 (in quadruplicate) with inclosures covering aircraft accident of Lt. George C. Van Meter, in aircraft A-26B-25, ACSN 41-39333, 14 January 1945.

For the Commanding Officer:



George Schenkein
GEORGE SCHENKEIN,
Captain, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

1 Incl. - AAF Form 14 (in quadruplicate) with inclosures.

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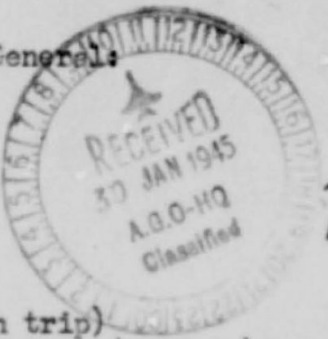
E-Q-3

HEADQUARTERS 9TH BOMBARDMENT DIVISION (M), APO 140, U. S. ARMY, 27 January 1945.

TO: Commanding General, Ninth Air Force, APO 696, U. S. Army.

Submitted in compliance with Memorandum 55-1, Headquarters Ninth Air Force, dated 27 November 1944.

For the Commanding General:



S L Permenter
for
C. C. VEGA, Jr.,
LT. COLONEL, A.C.
ADJUTANT GENERAL.

8 Incls:

- Incl 1 - AAF Form 14 (in trip)
- Incl 2 - Statement of Witness (in trip)
- Incl 3 - Statement of Medical Officer. (in trip)
- Incl 4 - Interrogation of Pilots on Icing Conditions (In trip)
- Incl 5 - Statement of Weather Officer. (in trip)
- Incl 6 - Statement of Engineering Officer. (in trip)
- Incl 7 - Statement of Crew Chief. (in trip)
- Incl 8 - Photographs (in trip)

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2nd Ind.

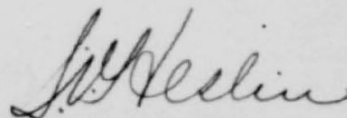
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HEADQUARTERS NINTH AIR FORCE, APO 696, US Army, 31 January 1945.

TO: Chief, Flying Safety, Army Air Forces, Winston-Salem 1, North Carolina.

Report of Aircraft Accident Committee approved.

For the Commanding General:



S.V. HESLIN,
Major, A.G.D.,
Asst Adj. Gen.

8 Incls: (2 cys ea w/d)

474

Accident No. 45-1-14-517

Date

Checked by

CEM

2-27-45

Analyzed by

CEE

2-28-45

Copied for Wright

Field by _____

Notes

Attention Capt. Roche

5 April 45

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3589:10-44 FS

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GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICES
WORLD WAR II RECORDS DIVISION

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT AND
INCIDENT REPORTS

1941 THRU 1948

(Filed by Fiscal Year - Beginning 1 January 1941)

DECLASSIFIED

DOD DIR 5200-9, Sept. 27, 1958

NWD by *J. J. [unclear]* date *May 1, 1960*

MICROFILMED BY
SECURITY AND SERVICES BRANCH

AGO MICROFILMING JOB NR D-482-10

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

MICROPHOTOGRAPHER'S REPORT

1. RECORDS OF (Name of agency and sub-division)	2. BRIEF TITLE OF RECORDS	
	3. FILM SERIES OR JOB NO. D482-1	4. REEL NO. 414

5. STARTS WITH
45-1-12-36

6. INTERMEDIATE POINTS	FLASH
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6

7. ENDS WITH
45-1-15-19

8. STARTED	9. FINISHED	10. TOTAL HOURS	11. TOTAL IMAGES
DATE 7-6-60	DATE 7-7-60	HOURS 1 ⁵⁰	2504

12. PHOTOGRAPHED BY (Signature of camera operator)
Pauline P. Zehring

13. REPORT APPROVED BY (Signature of supervisor and date)