

GROUP 1
 WAR DEPARTMENT
 LANGLEY FIELD, VIRGINIA
 U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

ACCIDENT No. _____

REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

(1) Place James River, Claremont, Virginia (2) Date 8 January 1944 (3) Time 01730 ENT
 AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model B-24E (5) A. F. No. 42-7339 (6) Station Langley Field, Virginia
 Organization: (7) I Bomb, 1st AF (8) 302nd Bomb (9) 357th Bomb
 (Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)

PERSONNEL

DUTY (10)	NAME (Last name first) (11)	RATING (12)	SERIAL NO. (13)	RANK (14)	PERSONNEL CLASS (15)	BRANCH (16)	AIR FORCE OR COMMAND (17)	RESULT TO PERSONNEL (18)	USE OF PARACHUTE (19)
IP	MAHAR, Paul E	P	0742172	2nd Lt	01	AC AUS	1st	Minor	Yes
SP	DUGGER, Frank R	P	0684852	2nd Lt	01	AC AUS	1st	Minor	No
CP	HENRICKSON, John L	P	0805823	2nd Lt	01	AC AUS	1st	Minor	Yes
N	FISCHENBERG, Sidney (NMI)	N	0814278	2nd Lt	01	AC AUS	1st	Minor	Yes
P	BOLIN, Dayton C	B	7-1665	P/O	92	AC AUS	1st	Minor	Yes
E	JONES, James R	E	6924830	T/Sgt	20	AC AUS	1st	Minor	No
AE	DUGGAN, Charles H	E	31259067	Sgt	20	AC AUS	1st	Minor	Yes
R	CHEMILL, George E	R	11103368	Sgt	20	AC AUS	1st	Minor	Yes
AR	FARELL, Russell V	R	31250091	Sgt	20	AC AUS	1st	Minor	Yes
IG	LATTEA, Clyde (NMI)	G	35376096	S/Sgt	20	AC AUS	1st	Fatal	No
G	HEGWER, Harry A	G	39169214	S/Sgt	20	AC AUS	1st	Fatal	No

PILOT'S CAREER WITH ACCIDENT

(20) MAHAR PAUL E (21) 0742172 (22) 2nd Lt (23) 13 (24) AC AUS
 (Last name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Serial number) (Rank) (Personnel class) (Branch)
 Assigned (25) I Bomb, 1st AF (26) 302nd Bomb (27) 357th Bomb (28) Langley Field, Va.
 (Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)
 Attached for flying (29) SAFE (30) -- (31) -- (32) 3568 B
 (Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Section)
 Original rating (33) Pilot (34) 4/12/43 Present rating (35) Pilot (36) 4/12/43 Instrument rating (37) 10/25/43
 (Rating) (Date) (Rating) (Date) (Date)

FIRST PILOT HOURS:

(at the time of this accident)
 (38) This type 289:45 (42) Instrument time last 6 months 37:35
 (39) This model 24:55 (43) Instrument time last 30 days 3:30
 (40) Last 90 days 170:25 (44) Night time last 6 months 71:00
 (41) Total 545:30 (45) Night time last 30 days 5:30

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

DAMAGE	(40) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(46) Aircraft <u>W 5</u> Complete Wreck	
(47) Engine(s) <u>W 5 W 5 W 5 W 5</u>	
(48) Propeller(s) <u>W 5 W 5 W 5 W 5</u>	

(50) Weather at the time of accident Ceiling 1500 feet overcast in snow - visibility 2 miles and light snow - winds 10 miles from North.
 (51) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident Yes
 (52) Cleared from Langley (53) To Langley (54) Kind of clearance CFR
 (55) Pilot's mission Local high altitude gunnery mission.
 (56) Nature of accident Emergency Forced Landing.

(57) Cause of accident De-icing boots failed to work. Pitot heater would not heat pitot sufficiently to prevent freezing.

(58) Form 24 not required.

RESTRICTED

III E

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

On the 8th January 1944, airplane B-24E, AAF number 42-7339, Pilot 2nd Lt PAUL E MAHAR, O-742172, had an emergency forced landing in the vicinity of Clarendon, Va., in the James River. The airplane took off from Langley at 1552 EWT in light snow flurries and proceeded to climb to assigned altitude of 20,000 ft. Weather at this time was; ceiling estimated 8,000 feet, solid overcast visibility 5 miles. On clearing the weather station the pilot was advised of icing conditions at 3000 ft. At 4000 ft the de-icing boots were tried and failed to function. Student Pilot Dugger called pilot Mahar's attention to this fact, yet the pilot continued to climb. By this time there was visible a thin coating of ice on the leading edge. The climb to 20,000 ft on instruments was uneventful, breaking on top at approximately 17,000 ft. After flying around and failing to make the intended rendezvous a descent was started. Pilots Dugger and Mahar both stated before the board that at this point, just before the descent, is when the pitot tube heat was applied. All went well until reaching an altitude of 15,000 ft at this point it was noted that rime ice was forming on the wings which appeared to affect the flying characteristics of the aircraft. (Both Dugger and Mahar removed oxygen masks between 15,000 and 14,000 ft). This being the first indication of trouble Pilot Mahar advised crew to don parachutes.

This was accomplished and acknowledged except for S/Sgt Clyde Lattea who pulled the rip cord and spilled his chute all over the flight deck. The descent continued until 12000 ft when the air-speed started to fall off rapidly with the "rate of climb" showing a descent, still the airplane was flying. Shortly after this at approximately 10,500 ft Pilot Mahar gave orders to abandon ship, and jumped first, knowing that one man still aboard, had rendered his chute useless by haste or just pure carelessness. Indicated air-speed at time of jump was 90 mph. After the first jump the ship was quickly emptied except for Lt Dugger, Sgt Jones, Sgt Hegwer and Sgt Lattea who had spilled his chute. Lt Dugger states he also was about to leave when he noticed Sgt Jones still aboard, asking Jones why he didn't jump, Jones replied "You aren't going to leave Lattea here without a chute, are you"? Lt Dugger states Lattea did not enter his mind when he was about to jump, but when Jones reminded him he too took off his chute to ride the ship in and give Lattea a chance. Sgt Jones then assumed co-pilot duties. The descent continued, with air-speed reading zero and still picking up more ice, down to 1000 ft, before breaking contact. After breaking contact Lt Dugger states he flew around using the radio to help him locate his position but in addition to the air-speed, radio, radio compass and flight indicator was out. With darkness approaching and not knowing how long he could hold the present altitude, a wheels-up landing was decided. Dugger states a few suitable fields for a forced landing were available but having no air-speed in addition to ice on the wings none was attempted for fear of overshooting and hitting the trees. Dugger states he had seen a river in the vicinity and decided to set down on the water. Bomb bay doors were closed and crew took up stations for a water landing. The ship hit tail first and then the nose which caused a very abrupt stop. What is known now and what was not known at the time of ditching is that the navigators escape door in the front was open, causing water to be more or less "shoveled" in, accounting for the abrupt stop. Due to confusion escape stories are somewhat varied, but it is known that the tail and part of the fuselage were broke from the aircraft on impact.

The Board believes the pitot tube heater did not function during any part of the flight. Attention is invited to the fact that no entry of inoperative de-icer boots was made in Form 1-a, although they were known to be inoperative. Entries on Form 1A for the previous day confirmed this. The Board further believes 2nd Lt PAUL E. MAHAR 90% responsible for the accident for these reasons: (1) Failing to turn back when notified of ice and inoperative de-icers, when at an altitude of 4000 ft. (2) Failing to exhaust all possible effort to bring airplane and crew to safety before jumping. (3) Failing to check weather properly whereas he would have known the storm to be moving from South to North. Fifteen minutes flying time in a northerly direction would have brought the ship into a 7000 foot ceiling and 7 mile visibility.

Signature

Richard G. Bushnell
RICHARD G. BUSHNELL, Major, AC

Wayne S. Johnson
WAYNE S. JOHNSON, Captain, AC

Walter E. Thorne
WALTER E. THORNE, Captain, AC

Charles B. Poillion Jr.
CHARLES B. POILLION Jr., Capt, AC

Henry L. Kirkendall
HENRY L. KIRKENDALL, Captain, MC

1944