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Notes

3985:10-440FS

Accident No. 45-11-15-521

Date

Checked by DM 1-12-95

Analyzed by DMW

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Notes ~~All Master Sheets~~ All to Arnold

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War Department
A.A.F. Form No. 14
(Revised Mar 15, 1942)

Accident No. 45-11-15-524

1-9-45 Y300 — B1

DEPARTMENT
Station A-61
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES
REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

(1) Place 3 Mi. West Bucy-En-Brie (2) Date 15 November 1944 (3) Time 1945
Aircraft: (4) Type & Model B-26B25 (5) Serial No. 41-31829 (6) Station A-61
Organization (7) IX B.D., Ninth AF (8) ------ (9) 1st. Pathfinder Y300
(Command & Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)

PERSONNEL

Duty (10)	Name (Last name first) (11)	Res. (12)	Serial No. (13)	Rank (14)	Cl. Class (15)	Br. (16)	Air Force or Command (17)	Result to Per. (18)	Use of Chute (19)
P	Irwin, Willard B	P	O-1699446	Capt	O1	AC	Ninth AF	None	S
CP	Clarke, George C.	CP	O-758535	2 Lt	O1	AC	Ninth AF	None	S
N	LeFeber, Alfred C	N	O-791837	Capt	O1	AC	Ninth AF	None	S
B	Smith, Wilfred L	B	O-443717	Capt	O1	AC	Ninth AF	None	S
RO	Hicklin, Walter H	RO	15062627	T/S	1EM	AC	Ninth AF	Minor	S
BG	Walker, Thomas J	BG	37489985	S/S	1EM	AC	Ninth AF	None	S
V	Renker, Lee F.	V	35317986	Sgt.	1EM	AC	Ninth AF	None	S
X	Wilson, Wilbert L	X	O-668873	1 Lt.	O1	AC	Ninth AF	None	S

(20) Irwin, Willard B. (Last, First, Init) (21) O-1699446 (Serial) (22) Capt. (Rank) (23) O1 (Per. Class) (24) AC (Branch)
Assigned (25) IX B.D., Ninth AF (Command & Air Force) (26) 323 (Group) (27) 456 (Squadron) (28) A-89 (Station)
Attchd for flying (29) IX B.D., Ninth (Command & A F) (30) ------ (Group) (31) 1st PFF (Sqdn) (32) A-61 (Station)
Org. Rat. (33) Pilot (Rating) (34) 27/5/42 (Date) Pres. rat. (35) Pilot (Rating) Inst. rat (37) ------ (Date)
First Pilot Hours (at time of accident) Pres. rat. date (36) 27/5/42

(38) This type	436:40	(42) Inst. time last 6 mos	05:10
(39) This model	357:20	(43) Inst. time last 30 days	00:00
(40) Last 90 days	27:50	(44) Night time last 6 mos	00:00
(41) Total	490:15	(45) Night time last 30 days	00:00

No record of previous flying time

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

Damage			(49) List of damaged parts
(46) Aircraft	W		Aircraft Complete Wreck
(47) Engine(s)	W	W	
(48) Propeller(s)	W	W	

(50) Weather at time of accident Ceiling 500 feet. Visibility 2 miles.
(51) Was the pilot flying on instruments at time of accident No
(52) Cleared from A-61 (53) To A-61 (54) Kind of clearance "J" Form
(55) Pilot's mission Practice Bombing Mission
(56) Nature of accident A/C crashed and burned after crew bailed out.
(57) Cause of accident A/C lost and out of gas. Crew bailed out.
(58) Has Form 54 been submitted? No.

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(10-42) 16-28757-2

Arrival 2-15-45

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DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

On 15th of November 1944, Capt. Willard B. Irwin, Pilot of B-26 41-31829, became lost on returning to station A-61 from a local training flight. Weather as stated during the flight period was ceiling 500 feet, visibility 2 miles in local area of station A-61. Navigator flew out E.T.A. to base where let down through undercast was made. As soon as visual contact was made with the ground, attempts were made to pick up check points for pilotage. This failing, the navigator had the pilot ascend again for the possibility of a Gee fix which turned out nil. Radio aids were of no use to pilot as a radio flimsy was not picked up before the flight and pilot had no knowledge of radio aid frequencies or call signs. Pilot aimlessly called for aid over all V.H.F. channels and received no answer. Darky procedure was used but response was nil. The Paris radio range was picked up on radio compass and pilot proceeded to home on it though he did not know it was the Paris range or have any idea where it was taking him. The vicinity of Paris was circled until fuel supply ran low and pilot having no idea of whereabouts ascended to 6500 feet and ordered crew to abandon ship. Procedure went smoothly pilot leaving last and no serious injury resulted from either the jump or the landing to crew except one radar mechanic who suffered a fractured ankle. The ship crashed close to where the pilot landed and was completely demolished by impact and fire. No damage was observed to private property.

Responsibility of accident lies with the pilot. Low ceilings and restricted visibility added to the difficulty of the situation but with the proper use of radio aids available, pilot should have been able to locate home base. All radio equipment as reported by radio operator was in good order. Carlessness was the direct cause of this accident as pilot was not properly prepared to make a flight in the E.T.O.

Recommendation to prevent repetition is that more emphasis within the organization towhich Capt. Irwin is assigned be placed on procedure and preparation of flight in the E.T.O.U.S.A.

Signature (Investigating Officer) William H. Fraser, Capt., AC

Charles D. Adair, Capt., AC

Richard L. Stiff, Capt., AC

Gilbert C. Hess, Capt., AC

Date 20 November 1944

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HEADQUARTERS
1st. Pathfinder Squadron Prov.
APO 140, U.S. Army

19 November 1944

C E R T I F I C A T E

On November 15, 1944, a training flight scheduling myself and crew, was started at 1510 hours. The training was completed at 1650 hours and a heading for return to our base was taken.

Let down was made from 11,500 feet and visual contact with the ground was made at 800 feet. The visibility below the overcast at this point was ½ mile. The landing strip was not located at E.T.A. and a circle of this area was made. Radio contact with Flying Control could not be made. I returned to 3500 feet for a fix by the Gee and was unable to make one. The Buncher Beacon could not be received on radio compass so I returned to 800 feet to try for a visual landmark.

At night fall, we returned to a higher altitude and calls were made on VHF channels but no answers were received. At 1900 hours, the gasoline was getting very low and a climb to 6500 feet was made for the purpose of abandoning the aircraft. About 1910 hours the crew of seven men jumped and I continued to circle until 1920 hours and then descended to 2500 feet at which altitude I jumped. The aircraft crashed about 2 miles from me and I was able to reach it later. The aircraft burned and was completely destroyed. I was flying A/C 41-31829 at the time.

Willard B. Irwin,
WILLARD B. IRWIN,
Captain, Air Corps.

Incl 2

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HEADQUARTERS
1st. Pathfinder Squadron Prov.
APO 140, U.S.Army

19 November 1944

C E R T I F I C A T E

On 15 November 1944, I took off at 1530 hours as a member of Capt. W.B. Irwin's crew serving as co-pilot.

We proceeded to climb up and practice a mission run. At approximately 1700 hours we began to descend on a course for the home field. We could not find the field and when the gas began to get low, we in turn bailed out.

I landed somewhere southeast of Paris.

George G. Clarke

GEORGE G. CLARKE,
2nd. Lt., Air Corps,

Ind. 3

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HEADQUARTERS
1st. Pathfinder Squadron Prov.
APO 140, U.S. Army

19 November 1944

C E R T I F I C A T E

On Wednesday, November 15, 1944 at 1510 hours Capt. Irwin's plane and crew on which I, the undersigned was the navigator, became airborne. Our mission was a practice flight on special equipment on the "Oregon" range. The mission was completed at 1650 hours whereupon we set course for the Base. When the E.T.A. for the base had expired, a circle of the area was made with visual contact at 800 feet. Finding this to no avail, we climbed to 3500 feet where I attempted to establish my position by Gee. This proved to no avail.

We let down again in an attempt to find a landmark visually. This also proved fruitless. As darkness fell, we attempted to contact by radio compass but again in vain. Again we climbed and circled in darkness and transmitted calls on VHF and Command channels, and I attempted a fix LOP by Gee but no response was received. At 1910 hours, I abandoned ship, the fifth of the crew of eight to leave.

Alfred C. LeFeber

ALFRED C. LE FEBER,
Captain, Air Corps.

Encl. #

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HEADQUARTERS
1st. Pathfinder Squadron Prov.
APO 140, U.S. Army

19 November 1944

SUBJECT: Assessment of Damage to A/C 41-31829, B-26B25.

TO : Commanding General, IX Bombardment Division, APO 140, U.S. Army.
Attention: A-3.

1. Following is the damage incurred on A/C B-26B25, 41-31829 in an accident that occurred on 15 November 1944:

Airplane Major Replacement.

Vaner A. Smith
VANER A. SMITH,
Captain, Air Corps,
S-3 Officer.

Incl: 5

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LTR HQ 1st Pathfinder Sq Prov, APO 140, 21 Nov subj: a/c acdnt rpt
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E-CSJ-3

360.33 2nd Ind.
HEADQUARTERS NINTH AIR FORCE, APO 696, US Army. [redacted] 1944

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

Report and recommendation of Aircraft Accident Committee approved.

For the Commanding General:

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

5 Incls: n/c

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1-7877

HEADQUARTERS
1st. Pathfinder Squadron Prov.
APO 140, U.S. Army

21 November 1944

SUBJECT: Aircraft Accident Report.

TO : Commanding General, Ninth Air Force, APO 696, U.S. Army.
(Through Channels)

1. Transmitted herewith is AAF Form 14 and supporting papers concerning accident of B-26B25, Air Corps Number 41-31829, which occurred at 1945, 15 November 1944, 3 miles West of Rzoy-En-Brie.

Robert A Porter
ROBERT A. PORTER,
Lt. Col., Air Corps,
Commanding.

MAIL ROOM 9TH BOMB

Inclosures:

1. AAF Form 14.
2. Certificate of Willard B. Irwin, Capt. AC.
3. Certificate of George G. Clarke, 2nd. Lt., AC.
4. Certificate of Alfred C. LeFeber, Capt., AC.
5. Assessment of Damage to A/C 41-31829.

E-J-3

360.33 1st Ind.
HEADQUARTERS 9TH BOMBARDMENT DIVISION (M), APO 140, U. S. ARMY, 15 December 1944.

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

Submitted in compliance with Memorandum 55-1, Headquarters Ninth Air Force, dated 22 March 1944.

For the Commanding General:

S. L. PARMENTER,
CAPTAIN, A.C.
ASST ADJ. GEN.

20 DEC 1944

5 Incls: n/c

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360.33 2nd Ind. E-CSJ-3

HEADQUARTERS NINTH AIR FORCE, APO 696, US Army. 25 DEC 1944

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

Report and recommendation of Aircraft Accident Committee approved.

For the Commanding General:

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

295

5 Incls: n/c

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NAME OF PILOT			TYPE OF PLANE			ACCIDENT NUMBER		
IRWIN, Willard B.			B.26 B25 41-31829			45-11-15-324		
CHARGED TO:	OUT	IN	CHARGED TO:	OUT	IN	CHARGED TO:	OUT	IN
Med. Safety	3-19	3/22						
Lt. Arnold	3-21	3/26						

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