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WAR DEPARTMENT
A. A. F. Form No. 14
(Revised May 15, 1942)

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WAR DEPARTMENT
AAF STATION A-73
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

ACCIDENT NO. 45-1-16-532

2-22-45

REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

(1) Place AAF Station A-73 (2) Date 16 January 1945 (3) Time 1207

AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model B-26G15 (5) A. F. No. 44-67840 (6) Station A-73

Organization: (7) 9th B.D. NINTH AF (8) 391st Bomb (9) 573rd 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)
P	Edwards, George A. Jr.	P	0-689950	1st Lt	18	AC	NINTH AF	Fatal	No
CP	Rhoda, Merton J. Jr.	P	0-817528	1st Lt	18	AC	NINTH AF	Major	No
B	Butler, Charles W.	B	0-722693	2nd Lt	18	AC	NINTH AF	Major	No
EG	Franques, Lester E.	EG	38267498	S/Sgt	38	AC	NINTH AF	Minor	No
RG	Coe, William J.	RG	13157796	T/Sgt	38	AC	NINTH AF	Fatal	No
AG	Velthouse, John J.	AG	36464278	S/Sgt	38	AC	NINTH AF	Fatal	No

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT

(20) Edwards (Last name) George (First name) A. (Middle initial) Jr. (21) 0-689950 (Serial number) (22) 1st Lt (Rank) (23) 18 (Personnel class) (24) AC (Branch)

Assigned (25) 9th B.D., NINTH AF (Command and Air Force) (26) 391st Bomb (Group) (27) 573rd Bomb (Squadron) (28) A-73 (Station)

Attached for flying (29) 9th B.D., NINTH AF (Command and Air Force) (30) 391st Bomb (Group) (31) 573rd Bomb (Squadron) (32) A-73 (Station)

Original rating (33) Pilot (Rating) (34) 30 Aug '43 (Date) Present rating (35) Pilot (Rating) (36) 30 Aug '43 (Date) Instrument rating (37) 27 Oct 1943 (Date)

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

(38) This type	262:20	(42) Instrument time last 6 months	1:30
(39) This model	28:15	(43) Instrument time last 30 days	1:00
(40) Last 90 days	35:05	(44) Night time last 6 months	3:30
(41) Total	525:25	(45) Night time last 30 days	2:30

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

	DAMAGE L	DAMAGE R	(49) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(46) Aircraft	W		Total Loss.
(47) Engine(s)	W	W	
(48) Propeller(s)	W	W	

(50) Weather at the time of accident Visibility of fourteen hundred (1400) yards; ceiling unlimited; no wind.

(51) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident No.

(52) Cleared from A-73 (53) To A-73 (54) Kind of clearance Operational

(55) Pilot's mission Combat.

(56) Nature of accident Plane crashed into ground immediately after take-off.

(57) Cause of accident Complete or partial failure of left engine.

(58) Has 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)

1. On 16 January 1945, 1st Lt George A. Edwards took off on a combat mission in a B-26G15 aircraft, A.S. #44-67840, and crashed immediately after take-off. He was scheduled to fly No. 4 position in the high flight of the first box, and took off in the proper order in the formation. Ship carried bomb load of 2 X 2000 lbs. G. P., fused 1/10 nose and non-delay tail.

Take-off, as observed by personnel in the control tower and at other vantage points on the ground, appeared to be normal in every respect. Lt Edwards started his take-off run approximately twenty (20) seconds behind the No. 3 ship of his flight and seemed to experience no difficulty in leaving the ground, his ship becoming airborne about two-thirds of the way down the runway. He had attained about fifty (50) feet of altitude and had retracted his landing gear, when his left wing was seen to dip and the ship went into a turn to the left, meanwhile losing altitude rapidly. Examination of marks left on the ground by the aircraft indicates that the left wing first struck the ground just off the up-wind end of the take-off runway. After this first contact, the aircraft remained airborne for approximately one-hundred (100) yards and then crashed into the ground. Both engines were torn off and the plane broke in two at a point just forward of the top turret. The forward part skidded about one-hundred (100) yards beyond the engines and the tail section, which remained fairly close together. Personnel arriving immediately after the crash found the forward section on fire. The work of removing personnel from the wreck began at once and all crew members except the pilot had been removed when the bombs, still contained in the bomb bay, exploded. This explosion occurred approximately ten (10) minutes after the aircraft had crashed.

Inspection of the two engine assemblies showed that the left and right engine propellers had lost three and two blades respectively, the complete blade in each case having been torn in its entirety from the propeller hub.

2. Cause: 100% materiel failure.

The board feels that this accident was the result of either complete or partial failure of the left engine immediately after take-off.

3. Recommendations: None.

Signature: James A. Sullens
JAMES A. SULLENS, Lt Col, AC.
Walter J. Ives
WALTER J. IVES, Maj, AC.
Carroll A. Santos, Jr.
CARROLL A. SANTOS, JR., Maj, AC.

Date 24 January 1944.

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OFFICE OF THE SURGEON
573rd Bomb Squadron

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

SUBJECT: Report of Aircraft Accident.

TO : Commanding Officer, 391st Bombardment Group, APO# 140, U S Army.

In compliance with VOCO 391st Bombardment Group, the following report on the aircraft piloted by 1st George A. Edwards Jr., ASN O-689950, 573rd Bombardment Squadron, 391st Bombardment Group, 16 January 1945, is submitted:

1. Position of Observation: Plane was observed approximately 75 yards from the right side of the end of runway 28.

2. Time: Shortly after 1200 hours, 16 January 1945.

3. Takeoff and Crash: The plane took off normally using about three quarters of the runway. Wheels came up promptly and were just about closing when the plane reached the end of the runway. At this juncture the plane rocked slightly as though it were in prop wash and the left wing started to dip down. The plane rapidly turned left as if it were in a ninety degree turn, the left wing hit the ground and the tail was low enough so that it may also have dragged on the ground. The plane swung back almost level and crashed to the ground. Because the ambulance was moving and because of the haze present the actual crash was not observed. When the runway was reached the flames from the plane could be seen. During takeoff the engines sounded normal.

LEO J. MURPHY
Capt., Med. Corps,
Squadron Surgeon.

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STATEMENT

Report of interview with 1st Lt Merton J. Rhoda, Jr.:

Lt Rhoda was scheduled to fly as co-pilot in a B-26G15, A.F. #44-67840, on a combat mission on 16 January 1945. After a normal formation take-off the airplane crashed after attaining approximately fifty (50) feet of altitude.

Lt Rhoda stated that the take-off was normal and that the last time he recalls looking at the engine instruments both engines were indicating 51" of manifold pressure and 2700 RPM. Lt Rhoda pulled the wheels up on the pilot's signal and approximately 1/4 flaps were left in the down position from the start of the take-off run until the airplane crashed.

Lt Rhoda states that immediately after the airplane became airborne it started a turn to the left and he thought his pilot was getting out of the way of possible prop-wash, but instead of leveling out the airplane tightened up in the left turn and the left wing tip struck the ground. He believes they were in approximately a 45° bank to the left at this time.

Lt Rhoda said that before the airplane hit the ground the pilot was using both hands on the wheel and a great amount of pressure was being exerted on the right rudder, in an attempt to right the plane. He attempted to help the pilot but before any response was gained from the controls, all controls went limp, the airplane shuddered, and stalled into the ground.

Lt Rhoda believes that the cause of the accident was failure (either partial or complete) of the left engine. He said there was no feeling of prop-wash experienced. There was no indication of the aircraft leveling out in the left turn, instead the turn tightened up.

Lt Rhoda does not remember the pilot, or himself, changing the engine settings, or cutting any switches before the crash. He believes the engines were still running at take-off power.

Lt Rhoda pulled the top hatch just before crashing but he does not remember how he got out of the airplane.

James A Sullens

JAMES A. SULLENS,
Lt Col, Air Corps,
Investigating Officer.

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HEADQUARTERS
AAF STATION A-73

G-F-3

360.33

APO 140, U S Army
25 January 1945

SUBJECT: Report of Aircraft Accident, A.F. No. 44-67840.

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

Transmitted herewith WD AAF Form No. 14, Report of Aircraft Accident, in accordance with paragraph 2, Memorandum 62-2, Headquarters, IX Bomber Command dated 18 April 1944.

For the Commanding officer:

RECEIVED 25 JAN 1945

CYRIL [illegible] FARFEL,
1st Lt, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

4 Inclosures:
Incl #1 - WD AAF Form No. 14 (in quad)
Incl #2 - Statement of Investigating Officer (in quad)
Incl #3 - Statement of Squadron Surgeon (in quad)
Incl #4 - Crash picture (in quad)

360.33 1st Ind. E-G-3
HEADQUARTERS 9TH BOMBARDMENT DIVISION (M), APO 140, U. S. ARMY, 30 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:

RECEIVED 2 FEB 1945 HEADQUARTERS Ninth Air Force A.G. Section

C. C. VEGA, Jr.
LT. COLONEL, A.C.
ADJUTANT GENERAL.

4 Incls: 1 cy ea w/d

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NAME OF PILOT			TYPE OF PLANE			ACCIDENT NUMBER		
EDWARDS, George A., Jr.			B-26			45-1-16-532		
CHARGED TO:	OUT	IN	CHARGED TO:	OUT	IN	CHARGED TO:	OUT	IN

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