

WAR DEPARTMENT  
A. F. Form No. 14  
(Revised May 12, 1942)

Accident No. \_\_\_\_\_

1-19-45

WAR DEPARTMENT  
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES  
REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

97 4

(1) Place San Giovanni Airfield, Italy (2) Date 26 December 1944 (3) Time 1020  
AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model B-24H (5) A. F. No. 42-50416 (6) Station APC 520  
Organization: (7) 15th Air Force (8) 454th Bomb Gp. (9) 738th Bomb Squadron (H)  
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)

PERSONNEL

DATE	NAME (Last name first)	RATING	SERIAL NO.	RANK	PERSONNEL CLASS	BRANCH	AIR FORCE OR COMMAND	RESULTS TO PERSONNEL	USE OF PARACHUTE
(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)
	P KOLEMBA, John C.	P	0-820035	1st Lt.	18	AC	15th AF	None	No
	CP ST. CLAIR, Robert S.	P	0-1575186	2nd Lt.	18	AC	15th AF	None	No
	E Howland, Theodore L.	Eng	39207043	S/Sgt.	38	AC	15th AF	None	No
	F Troyer, Richard L.	P	17128076	S/SET.	38	AC	15th AF	None	No

PILOT OR CREW MEMBER ACCIDENT

(20) KOLEMBA John C. (21) 0-820035 (22) 1st Lt. (23) 18 (24) AC  
(Last name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Serial number) (Rank) (Personnel class) (Branch)  
Assigned (25) 15th Air Force (26) 454th Bomb Gp. (27) 738th Bomb Sq. (H) (28) APC 520  
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)  
Attached for flying (29) 15th Air Force (30) 454th Bomb Gp. (31) 738th Bomb Sq. (H) (32) APC 520  
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)  
Original rating (33) Pilot (34) 1-7-44 Present rating (35) Pilot (36) 1-7-44 Instrument rating (37) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Rating) (Date) (Rating) (Date) (Date)

First Pilot Hours:

(at the time of this accident) 0.1 TO - 1  
(38) This type 302.15 (42) Instrument time last 6 months \_\_\_\_\_  
(39) This model 148.30 (43) Instrument time last 30 days \_\_\_\_\_  
(40) Last 90 days 137.30 (44) Night time last 6 months \_\_\_\_\_  
(41) Total 369.00 (45) Night time last 30 days \_\_\_\_\_

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

(46) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS

DAMAGE	REMARKS
(46) Aircraft <u>N</u>	
(47) Engine(s)	
(48) Propeller(s)	

(49) Weather at the time of accident Clear, ground muddy. EH

(51) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident No.  
(52) Cleared from 454th Bomb Group (53) To Return to home base. (54) Kind of clearance Contact O

(55) Pilot's mission: Returning from 454th Bomb Group after completion of bombing mission.

(56) Nature of accident: Taxing accident. IC

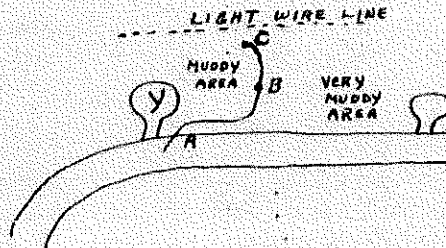
(57) Cause of accident: Taxing too fast, causing airplane to skid on muddy surface. While attempting to park, right wing of airplane hit electric light pole.

(58) Has Form 564 been submitted? No. 01-23-82 Smith

RESTRICTED

## DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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



Upon returning to home field following a landing at another airdrome due to weather, pilot taxied to original parking area which was adjacent to hardstand Y. This area has been used for approximately six months in all kinds of weather, and was currently quite muddy.

Pilot left taxi-way at point A, taxied parallel to runway upon direction of ground crew chief and turned away from taxi-way, heading toward light line. At point B ground crew chief motioned aircraft to make left turn and park facing hardstand Y. Aircraft continued toward light line, the left wheel sliding for approximately twenty (20) feet then taking hold, the aircraft turning to the left with the right wing striking a light line pole, breaking the pole and damaging the wing.

Off the taxi-way, the aircraft was taxied with difficulty, first one wheel sliding and then the other. Evidence indicates the aircraft was taxied too fast in the mud. It appears that the pilot attempted to turn the aircraft upon the signal of the ground crew chief but that the condition of the ground caused the aircraft not to turn at that time. The aerial engineer apparently saw the danger of striking the pole and advised the pilot too late.

It is the opinion of the Accident Board that the cause of the accident should be allocated to the following:

1. 100% pilot error. The condition of the parking area was not suitable for safe parking due to mud and slippery conditions. Although it was the responsibility of the ground engineering personnel to designate a proper plan to park the aircraft, the pilot exercised poor judgment in continuing to taxi with very little control over the aircraft in the mud, after he had entered the area.

*James F. Weaps*  
 JAMES F. WEAPS,  
 Lt. Col., Air Corps,  
 Investigating Officer.

*William R. Grady*  
 WILLIAM R. GRADY,  
 Major, Air Corps,  
 Investigating Officer.

Signature: *William B. Lance, Jr.*  
 (Investigating Officer)  
 WILLIAM B. LANCE, JR.,  
 Lt. Col., Air Corps,  
 Senior Officer - Aircraft  
 Accident Investigation Board.

Doc. 4 JANUARY 1944

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16-38277-1

DATE	STATION	GROUP NO. & TYPE	AIRCRAFT MODEL	AIRCRAFT SERIAL NO.		FLIGHT DATA		
				454th Bomb Gp (H)	B-24H	42-50416	42-50416	FROM
NAME - ASN - GRADE - ORGANIZATION		SQUADRON NO. & TYPE		USE		NO. OF LADENES		
Theodore L. Howland		758th Bomb Sqdn (H)		ALWAYS ENTER DUTY STATION, GRADE, AND AIRCRAFT MODEL IN THIS COLUMN. ENTER THE FLIGHT TIME UNDER LOCALITY.		NO. OF LADENES		
18	Roelms, John C. 1st Lt. 0820035	F	6:20			AF0 520	10:00	
18	St Clair, Robert S. 2nd Lt. 01575186	CP	0:20			AF0 520	10:20	
18	Howland, Theodore L. S/Sgt. 39207043	H	0:20			I	20	
18	Troyer, Richard L. S/Sgt. 17128076	F	0:20					
CERTIFIED CORRECT								
<i>James S. Howland</i> Capt., Air Corps, Operations Officer.								
CHECKED: LEGIBLE AND CORRECT				TRANSCRIBED: TOTAL FLIGHT TIME ENTERED ON FORM 1A				TOTAL FLIGHT TIME : 20

WAR DEPARTMENT  
S. A. F. FORM NO. 1  
REV. 11 JAN. 42

AIRPLANE FLIGHT REPORT - OPERATIONS



738TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF  
454TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF  
APO 520 US ARMY

30 December 1944.

SUBJECT: Aircraft accident. (Serial No. 42-50416)

STATEMENT  
of  
JOHN C. KOLEBRA  
(Pilot)

On December 26, 1944, airplane 42-50416, Type B-24H, ran into an Electric Line pole while an attempt to park it on a hardstand was being made.

The accident occurred while we were returning from the 465th Bombardment Group (H). We had landed there the previous day due to the fact that a landing on our own field was impossible on account of bad weather.

Taxiing up to the hardstand approaching from the north end of the field, I started cutting in with the intention of swinging around the hard stand, not wishing to taxi through the mud which was extremely bad.

The lineeman was directing me and motioned me further and further on and I followed his motions. Then as I reached his desired point he motioned me to make a 90 degree turn. I did this by locking the left wheel and turning with that wheel as a pivot. As I half completed my turn the engineer hollered to me to stop and immediately I stepped on the right brake and pulled off the throttles. The stand was extremely muddy and the momentum caused the right wheel to keep on skidding, resulting in the right wing hitting the Electric line pole.

*John C. Kolebra*  
JOHN C. KOLEBRA,  
1st Lt., Air Corps,  
Pilot.  
738th Bomb Sqd (H)  
454th Bomb Gr (H)

738TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (B) AAF  
454TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (B) AAF  
AFC 520 US ARMY

30 December 1944.

SUBJECT: Aircraft accident. (Serial No. A2-50416)

STATEMENT  
of  
ROBERT S. ST. CLAIR  
(Co-Pilot)

On December 26, 1944, Airplane A2-50416, Type B-24D, ran into an Electric line pole while an attempt to park it on a hardstand was being made.

Upon returning to our hardstand the Pilot, John C. Solemba, obeyed implicitly the instructions of the planes crew chief while parking the aircraft. The crew chief S/Sgt. Winslow, directed the Pilot off the hardstand and into the mud where the plane nearly bogged down.

In order to keep the plane moving the Pilot eased on a little throttle, which in my own sight was necessary. Upon the signal of the crew chief the Pilot swung the plane around to come back on the hard stand. As the plane came about I looked out of the right hand window to be sure the wing would not hit the Electric line pole near by. However, it was while looking at this that our engineer, S/Sgt. F.I. Howland yelled that we could not clear the pole and the Pilot already had his feet on the brakes, so he said afterwards. By the mud marks made in the soft mud I knew that to be correct.

Marks in the mud showed the left wheel to be sliding from that point where the plane almost bogged down. The right wheel was free to turn. As my feet and hands were entirely off the controls I could make no definite statement in regard to that. The Pilot afterwards told me that he didn't hold the left wheel with the brake until the crew chief told him to turn the plane.

*Robert S. St. Clair*  
ROBERT S. ST. CLAIR,  
2nd Lt., Air Corps,  
Co-Pilot,  
738th Bomb Sqdn (B),  
454th Bomb Gr (B).


CERTIFICATE

738th Bombardment Squadron,  
454th Bombardment Group (H),  
AFO 520  
31 December 1944.

1. I, was standing by an airplane across the taxi strip from the scene of the accident watching the airplane serial number, 42-50416, which is in question being taxied into its hardstand, on 26 December 1944.

2. At the time I remarked to my inspector that the ship was being taxied too fast. The hardstand was wet and slippery. In order to enter the hardstand, it is necessary to go across a slight ditch which required additional power momentarily, but not to the excess that the pilot employed. After the ship hit the pole, I went over to the scene of the accident. The first observation I made was that the left main gear had been sliding for approximately thirty (30) feet before the airplane had started its turn to the left.

3. I feel that the accident was due to taxiing too fast on very slippery ground.

  
JOHN P. SKINNER  
Capt, AC,  
Eng C.

738TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF  
454TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF  
APO 520 US ARMY

30 December 1944

SUBJECT: Aircraft accident. (Serial No. 42-50416).

STATEMENT  
of  
THEODORE L. HOWLAND  
(Engineer)

On December 26, 1944, Airplane 42-50416, Type B-24H, ran into an Electric Line pole while an attempt to park it on a hardstand was being made.

The accident to 416 happened on hardstand 11A as we attempted to park on our hardstand. The right wing of the plane was damaged.

My Pilot was following W/Sgt. Winslow's parking signals which carried us off the hardstand and into some very thick mud. We almost bogged down but the Pilot gave it a little throttle at this time, it was just at this time that the crew chief gave us the signal to turn.

We were using the left landing gear as a pivot in turning. The Co-Pilot, Lt. St. Clair looked out of his window to see if we would clear the power pole. I was also watching out of the top hatch. I saw that we would not clear the pole and hollered to the Pilot informing him of this. Our tire marks show that we stopped as soon as possible.

*Theodore L. Howland*

THEODORE L. HOWLAND,  
1/Lt., Air Corps,  
Aerial Engineer,  
738th Bomb Sq (H)  
454th Bomb Gr (H)



TENTH AIRBORNE DIVISION (H) AAF  
ASSTY BOMBARDMENT GROUP (B) BAF  
AIC 920 US ARMY

30 December 1944.

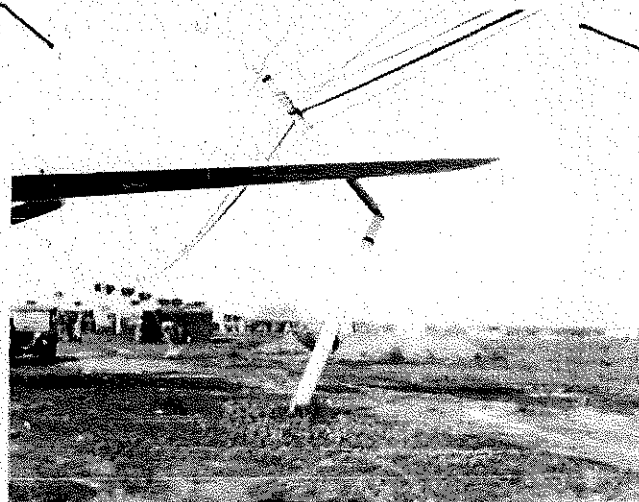
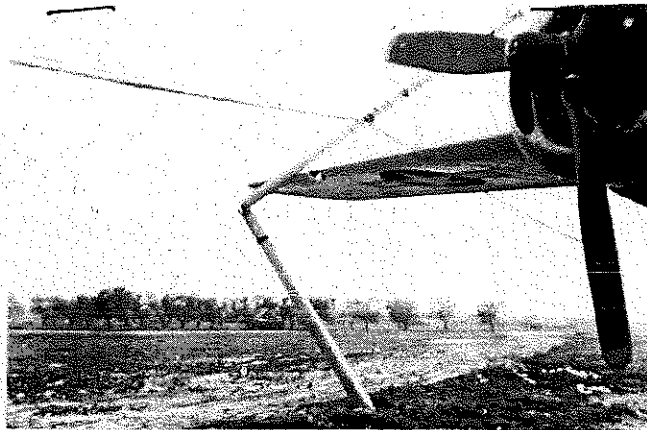
SUBJECT: Aircraft Accident. (Serial No. 42-50416).

STATEMENT  
of  
ROBERT E. MISERLOW  
(Crew Chief)

On December 26, 1944, airplane 42-50416, Type B-24D, ran into an Electric Line Pole while an attempt to park in a hardstand was being made.

1. Due to the heavy rain storm which occurred the day before the accident that damaged airplane 42-50416, the hardstand was very slippery.
2. At the time I directed the plane into the hardstand from the taxi strip, there was no member of the crew present above the flight deck.
3. The pilot was taxiing the plane from the South to the North position into the hardstand. I gave him the signal to bring the plane to a position facing my body, which would station the airplane in a West and East position. If the pilot had seen my hand signal, which was very obvious, he should have made a left turn. He did not make the turn at the time I gave the signal. As the plane was taxiing in front of me, in a Northern direction, it started to skid, it did so for about thirty (30) feet.
4. While the plane was skidding, a member of the crew appeared above the flight deck through the escape hatch. I motioned with my hands and arms to hold the plane in a position facing North. The crew member who was above the flight deck then disappeared. Suddenly the plane made a left turn and crashed into a pole damaging the right wing.

*Robert E. Miserlow*  
ROBERT E. MISERLOW,  
1st Lt., Air Corps,  
Crew Chief,  
Tenth Bomb Group AB,  
South Beach, Tex.



HEADQUARTERS  
454TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H), AAF  
APO 520, U. S. ARMY

E-JFM-tz

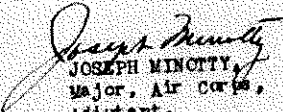
4 January 1945

SUBJECT: Accident Report.

TO : Chief, Flying Safety, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

1. In compliance with AAF Regulation 62-14A, dated 28 January 1944, transmitted herewith is the completed AAF Form 14 and inclosures pertaining to aircraft accident on 26 December 1944, of B-24H, AF No. 42-50416.

For the Commanding Officer,

  
JOSEPH MINOTTY,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Adjutant.

- 9 Incls:  
Incl 1 - AAF Form 14.  
Incl 2 - AAF Form 1.  
Incl 3 - AAF Form 1A.  
Incl 4 - Statement of 1st Lt. Kolemba.  
Incl 5 - Statement of 2nd Lt. St. Clair.  
Incl 6 - Statement of Capt. Skinner.  
Incl 7 - Statement of S/Sgt. Rowland.  
Incl 8 - Statement of M/Sgt. Winslow.  
Incl 9 - Photos.