

Melinda,

On 30 January 1944 there was a jeep accident in or near Catania [Sicily] two Flight Nurses were wounded, one nurse was killed.

2Lt Mildred W. WALLACE, ASN N-760265, from Pennsylvania, 807 MAES, she was first buried in the temporary American cemetery GELA in plot/grave I-98-1174, date of burial 31 January 1944 after the war she was repatriated and buried in the Redstone Cemetery, Uniontown in Pennsylvania

Attached a picture I found on www.findgrave.com - it is Mildred Wallace's grave.

The picture was taken by Joel F. Gilbert

since Mildred was in your mother's unit, no doubt your mother was at her funeral, maybe your mother remembers this sad day.

I have send this e-mail also to Mr Gilfert, perhaps he can get in toch with you giving his permission to use the picture on your site www.LegendsOfFlightNurses.org

Jan Bos

S E C R E T

SHEET NO. 6 WAR DI. , Hqs. 60th Troop Carrier Group. GERBINI MAIN, SICILY
(Station)
MONTH OF February, 1944. Prepared by: CLARK G. McCORKLE, 1st Lt., Air Corps,
Hqs., 60th T. C. Group, AAF

- | DAY | EVENTS |
|-----|--|
| 24 | This was a very unfortunate day. Plane # 61 of the 12th Squadron crashed, killing twenty-three occupants. They were 2nd Lt. Robert S. Smith, pilot; 2nd Lt. Inez Rees, J. ., co-pilot; 2nd Lt., Clair A. Reinzel, navigator; Cpl. Joehn H. Arp, crew chief; Cpl. Cliff Webb, Jr., asst crew chief; Cpl Nicholas Geekas, radio operator; 2 flight nurses and 15 litter patients. We fell especially badly about the accident since the plane was carrying litter patients. They had been picked up at Catania early in the morning and were being taken to Bizerte. It was overcast and rather than try to get over it a route was chosen following a canyon past the high ground around Caitigirone. In one of these canyons the plane flew into the floor of the canyon, bounced and crashed sideways on a second high range in the floor. The wreckage caught fire. The catastrophe was first discovered by the 62nd Group at Ponte Olivio which is near the scene. It may have been reported by civilians to them. At first review of their planes on mission they did not think this to be their plane. They reported the fact to the 51st Troop Carrier Wing and we in turn were notified to check our status board about noon. It appeared that it might be ours so immediately after lunch several of our office flew to Ponte Olivio and obtained the above facts. |
| 25 | It is a long ride between the villa and operations Since it has been raining frequently and making the traveling back and forth very disagreeable the job of putting side curtains on the operations jeep was undertaken. Metal rods has to be welded from the body to the top bows and other rods were made into the framework for a door. Snaps and canvass was obtained. S/Sgt. Robert D. Ormsby did the greater share of the work but he was assisted by Major L. L. Long, Major L. L. Kilpatrick and any of the others in S-2 or S-3 who had time or ideas. Windows were made in the curtains, doors and in the vack of the top from plexiglass from wrecked gliders and planes. When finished it was a very respectable jpb, complete with handles and bolts on the floors. The enlisted men of the S-2 and S-3 sections have a weapons warrier to take them to meals to the villa, as do the men in group communications. |
| 26 | The 456th Service Squadron is moving in to the place recently vacated by the 342nd Service Squadron. With them they have brought in addition to the ordinary equipment carried a G. I. Fire Wagon for use as a crash truck on the line and a fire truck for the buildings on the field. Captain Dunagan has been appointed Base Fire Marshall.
This afternoon all of the men and officers assembled in front of one of the planes for a picture. This is attached to the Outline History for this month. While this was being taken thieves, presemable civilians, broke into the house occupied by the men of S-2 and S-3 and stole shoes, clothing and cigarettes and any thing else which they could lay their hands on in a short time. |
| 27 | A Staff meeting was held this afternoon to inform all departments heads of a contemplated move to Italy. |
| 28 | Major L. L. Long and Major L. L. Kilpatrick, Major R. G. Stark and Captain (Ch) F. Q. McGuire went to Brindisi, Italy to look over the site of the location for the Group. Lt. Husman flew the newly acquired C-61 there so he can spend a few days getting information of an operational nature from the Group already there. Major Kilpatrick will stay on there with him for a few days.
There was a fire in the 12th Squadron area in one of the barracks today. The new fire fighting equipment just arrived in time. |

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

44-2-24-507
149

19501

(1) Place 1 Mile N.W. Caltagirone, Sicily (2) Date 24 February 1944 (3) Time 0915

AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model C-47Y 062 (5) A. F. No. 41-7728 (6) Station Corbini, Sicily
Organization: (7) 12th A.F. (8) 60th I.C.Gp. (9) 12th I.C.Sqdn.
(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)
0 P	Smith, R.S.	Pilot	0-740203	2nd Lt.	20	AC	12th AF	Killed	No
04 CP	Reis, I.J.	Pilot	0-745746	2nd Lt.	18	AC	12th AF	Killed	No
60 N	Reinsel, C.A.	Mav.	0-814136	2nd Lt.	18	AC	12th AF	Killed	No
62 E	Arr, J.H.	Eng.	5625229	Cpl.	20	AC	12th AF	Killed	No
63 R	Glekas, N.	Rad	11021963	Cpl.	20	AC	12th AF	Killed	No
64 W	Webb, C.J.	Eng.	14078084	Sgt.	20	AC	12th AF	Killed	No
67 M	Fitzpatrick,	Medic	34650964	S/Sgt.	20	AC	12th AF	Killed	No
67 M	Howren, E.	Nurse	N-787004	2nd Lt.	20	MC	12th AF	Killed	No
68 X	Pettitt, E. (Br)		6216234	LAC	25	Army		Killed	No
68 X	Giddings, R. (Br)		2013068	Sapper	25	Army		Killed	No
68 X	Peers, E. (Br)		2621707	LAC	25	Army		Killed	No
68 X	Harris, S. (Br)		6019755	Sgt. Maj	25	Army		Killed	No
Attached list of remainder of passengers.									

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT

(20) Smith, Robert S (21) 0-740203 (22) 2nd Lt. (23) ORC (24) AC
(Last name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Serial number) (Rank) (Personnel class) (Branch)
Assigned (25) TCC 12th AF (26) 60th I.C.Gp. (27) 12th I.C.Sqdn. (28) Corbini, Sicily
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)
Attached for flying (29) TCC 12th AF (30) 60th I.C.Gp. (31) 12th I.C.Sqdn. (32) Corbini, Sicily
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)
Original rating (33) Pilot (34) 10 Mar/43 Present rating (35) Pilot (36) 10 Mar/43 Instrument rating (37) 8 Sept., 1943
(Rating) (Date) (Rating) (Date) (Date)

FIRST PILOT HOURS:

(at the time of this accident)

(38) This type 434:40 (42) Instrument time last 6 months 12:00
(39) This model 158:20 (43) Instrument time last 30 days None
(40) Last 90 days 189:36 (44) Night time last 6 months 5:30
(41) Total 901:00 (45) Night time last 30 days None

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

(49) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS

DAMAGE	(49) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(46) Aircraft <u>NS</u>	<u>Complete wreck.</u>
(47) Engine(s) <u>NS</u>	
(48) Propeller(s) <u>NS</u>	

(50) Weather at the time of accident Ceiling zero, visibility zero, heavy ground fog.

(51) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident Apparently. Instrument conditions prevailed.

(52) Cleared from Catania, Sicily (53) To Maison Blanche, Algeria (54) Kind of clearance CFR

(55) Pilot's mission Evacuation of wounded.

(56) Nature of accident Undetermined.

(57) Cause of accident

0.2
0.5

86

5-20-44

Handwritten initials and notes.

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

1. The following report is the opinion of the Aircraft Accident Committee.
2. On 24 February 1944 at approximately 0915 hours a C-47, number 41-7725, enroute from Catania, Sicily to Maison Blanche, Algeria, crashed into a mountain-side one (1) mile northwest of the town of Caltagirone, Sicily. According to the account of Zupparde Luigi, a reliable witness, (- see incl. # /) the weather conditions in the vicinity of the accident were - ceiling zero - visibility zero.
3. The aircraft struck the mountainside at an angle of approximately 150 degrees to the slope of the hill () at an altitude of about fourteen hundred (1400) feet. Examination shows that both props dug full length into the ground at two (2) points, six (6) and three (3) feet respectively before the main point of impact, where there was a definite imprint of the left wing, propeller and engine. Following impact, the aircraft bounced slightly and veered about 10 degrees to the left. Burning and disintegrating, it skidded along the ground some forty (40) yards, spun around 180 degrees and came to a stop upside down. The earth was charred from the point of impact to the main part of the wreckage (wings, gas tanks, and a small remainder of fuselage) some forty (40) yards away, indicating that the fire began with impact. Sections of the nose, pilot's escape hatch, small mail door, float compass, radio equipment, and vacuum lines, together with parts of the fuselage were scattered all along this section of charred earth.

4. Both propellers were torn from the engines and embedded in the ground ten (10) yards beyond the crash point. Examination by the Engineering department (is - see incl. # 2) revealed that neither propeller had been feathered. The fuselage, right wing and right engine were overturned while the empennage, though badly burned, remained structurally intact. The left engine was thrown about thirty five (35) yards beyond the left wing which rested (overturned) twenty (20) feet from the right wing and remainder of fuselage. The remains of gas tanks still in the wings indicated explosion. Throttle quadrant controls, carburetor heater and oil shutter controls as well as panel instruments were not found.

5. The aircraft struck the hill at about fourteen hundred (1400) feet. This area can be cleared at two thousand (2000) feet, although it is the practice to fly it at twenty-five hundred (2500) feet to clear safely. It is possible that low temperature and wrong altimeter setting may have combined to give the pilot a false reading. The clearance for Maison Blanche was CFR. It is also possible that in attempting to maintain contact with the ground, the pilot inadvertently entered instrument conditions, since low hanging clouds were characteristic of the area that day. These theories and other possible explanations have to be discarded for the lack of evidence.

6. There was no evidence of material failure. The absence of survivors or expert eye witnesses and the nature of the wreckage make it difficult to be conclusive. However, it is certain that in the future pilots on missions of such a nature should fly instruments only under absolute necessity, be thoroughly aware of the advantages of altitude and made to exercise decisions which ignore inconvenience or delay as long as the safety of their passengers is assured.

William J. Burke
WILLIAM J. BURKE
Major, Air Corps

Lester A. Brinkhoff
LESTER A. BRINKHOFF
Captain, Air Corps

Jon W. Roggli
JON W. ROGGLI
2nd Lt., Air Corps

Signature _____
(Investigating Officer)

Date 7 March 1944

Continuation of passenger list on first sheet.

63	Booth, D.M.	(ANC)	N-787161	2nd Lt.	96- 26	MC	12th AF	Killed	✓	No
64	Gartside, V.	(Br)	3523607	Sgt.	26	ARMY		Killed	✓	No
65	William, L.	(Br)	6467440	Cpl.	26	ARMY		Killed	✓	No
66	Irvine, T.	(Br)	926126	Sapper	26	ARMY		Killed	✓	No
67	Hustable, F.W.	(Br)	6020912	Pvt.	26	ARMY		Killed	✓	No
68	Ingram, F.	(Br)	2621433	Guardman	26	ARMY		Killed	✓	No
69	Ackland, V.	(Br)	14351488	Pvt.	26	ARMY		Killed	✓	No
70	Sedden,	(Br)	3661986	Pvt.	26	ARMY		Killed	✓	No
71	Allan, A.	(Br)	5437491	Pvt.	26	ARMY		Killed	✓	No
72	Grant, K.	(Br)	1599002	Pvt.	26	ARMY		Killed	✓	No
73	Gamble, W.	(Am)	34291362	Sgt.	26	ARMY		Killed	✓	No
74	Hill, N. G.	(Br)	31523	Lt.Col.	10 26 91	ARMY		Killed	✓	No

ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION.

Incl. # 1

24th FEBRUARY, 1944.

CALTAGIRONE.

STATEMENT OF ZUPPARDO Luigi de Filippo e de Bonogiorno
Nunzia, nato Gela il 18-3-1927, abitanti via Largo S. Giorgio n.9,
CALTAGIRONE, relative to aeroplane accident at Caltagirone on 24-2-44.

At 9-15am on 24th February, 1944, I was walking along viale Regina Elena, Caltagirone, when I heard the sound of a low flying aeroplane. I am quite sure of the time because I noticed when I left home that it was 9-10am and the point where I noticed the plane was about five minutes walk away. I am definitely sure that the engines of the plane were functioning, but it was very low.

I looked for the plane because it seemed so low, but as there was a fog I could not see it. The fog was very thick and I am of the opinion that visibility was reduced to twenty (20) metri at ground level.

As I looked for it, I heard a loud crash like the sound of a bomb and I ran towards the point where the crash seemed to come from. I guessed the plane had crashed and ran towards it because I thought some men might be injured and I might be able to render assistance.

I ran round round the rountain path, guided by the sound of what I imagined was exploding ammunition. I saw exploding flashes of red and white, starting from the ground and going up into the air. I got to the spot where the plane had crashed, and ran down the side of the hill. There I saw the wrecked plane on fire and as soon as I got near it, I saw five men dead near the main wreckage. I then at once ran to the office of the Guardia Municipale and told Brigadiere Sealso of what I had seen. I told the Brigadiere about 15 minutes after I had heard the crash.

The Brigadiere telephoned for the Carabinieri and almost immediately, Capitano Campailla arrived in his car and took me to Captain Parker.

There was a wind blowing at the time, but a very light wind. I am a shoemaker by trade.

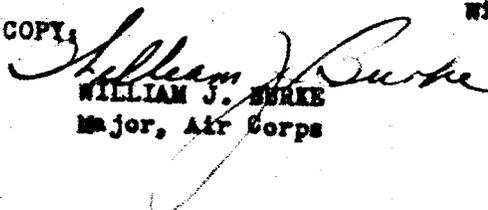
/s/ZUPPARDO LUIGI

Witness

/s/A. PARKER

Capt., A.C.C.

A TRUE COPY:


WILLIAM J. BURKE
Major, Air Corps

MILDRED W. WALLACE

1911 — 1944

2ND LT. ARMY NURSE CORPS

W. W. II