Accident No. 45-4-31-525

Date 9-2-45

Checked by [illegible]

Analyzed by [illegible]

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Notes

1225:9-43

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

RESTRICTED

WAR DEPARTMENT
AAF STATION 170
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

ACCIDENT NO. 45-7-31-523

REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

01-060   136   4

(1) Place Westfield Farm, near Little Hadham, Essex (2) Date 31 July 1944 (3) Time 1750

AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model A-20G-30 a20 (5) A. F. No. 43-9745 (6) Station AAF Station 170

Organization: (7) IX BC-Ninth AF (Command and Air Force) 9 (8) 416 Bomb (L) (Group) (9) 668 Bomb (L) (Squadron)

PERSONNEL BLL Z393

	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)
01	P	Lesher, Robert D	Pilot	0-684361	1st Lt.	18 01	AC	Ninth AF	None 1	None
64	G	Hedrick, Harold R.	Gunner	14165008	S/Sgt	38 20	AC	Ninth AF	Minor 2	None
64	G	Antanaitis, Adolfos J.	Gunner	31110809	S/Sgt	38 20	AC	Ninth AF	Major 3	None

RECEIVED AUG 25 1944

(20) Lesher (Last name) Robert (First name) D (Middle initial) (21) 0-684361 (Serial number) (22) 1st Lt. (Rank) (23) 18 (Personnel class) (24) AC (Branch) BLL Z393

Assigned (25) IX BC-Ninth AF 9 (Command and Air Force) (26) 416 Bomb(L) (Group) (27) 668 Bomb (L) (Squadron) (28) AAF Station 170 (Station)

Attached for flying (29) — (Command and Air Force) (30) — (Group) (31) — (Squadron) (32) — (Station)

Original rating (33) Pilot (Rating) (34) 6/26/43 (Date) Present rating (35) Pilot (Rating) (36) 6/26/43 (Date) Instrument rating (37) 12/10/43 (Date)

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

(38) This type (A-20)	445:15	(42) Instrument time last 6 months	—
(39) This model ~~(A-20G)~~	~~320:20~~	(43) Instrument time last 30 days	—
(40) Last 90 days	122:55	(44) Night time last 6 months	—
(41) Total	719:55	(45) Night time last 30 days	—

K

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE NF AMW 9-4

DAMAGE			(49) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(46) Aircraft	W 5		Complete wreck.
(47) Engine(s)	W 5	W 5	
(48) Propeller(s)	W 5	W 5	

(50) Weather at the time of accident Visibility 2-3 miles, 4 to 6/10 clouds at 1,000 feet EK

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

(52) Cleared from AAF Station 170 Z393 (53) To AAF Station 170 Z393 (54) Kind of clearance Operational O

(55) Pilot's mission Combat 05

(56) Nature of accident Wheels up crash landing. 05

(57) Cause of accident Materiel / Failure of left engine 01 06 40

(58) Has AAF Form 54 been submitted? No. It is being submitted.

RESTRICTED

War Department
A. A. F. Form No. 14
(Revised May 15, 1943)

RESTRICTED

WAR DEPARTMENT
AAF STATION 170
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

Accident No. 43-7-31-323

REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

(1) Place Westfield Farm, near Little Hadham, Essex (2) Date 31 July 1944 (3) Time 1750

Aircraft: (4) Type and model A-20G-30 (5) A. F. No. 43-9745 (6) Station AAF Station 170

Organization: (7) IX BC-Ninth AF (8) 416 Bomb (L) (9) 668 Bomb (L)
(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	Lesher, Robert D	Pilot	O-684361	1st Lt.	18	AC	Ninth AF	None	None
G	Hedrick, Harold R.	Gunner	14165008	S/Sgt	38	AC	Ninth AF	Minor	None
G	Antanaitis, Adolfos J.	Gunner	31110809	S/Sgt	38	AC	Ninth AF	Major	None

RECEIVED
HEADQUARTERS
NINTH AIR FORCE
AUG 25 1944
OFFICE OF FLYING SAFETY

(20) Lesher (Last name) Robert (First name) D (Middle initial) (21) O-684361 (Serial number) (22) 1st Lt. (Rank) (23) 18 (Personnel class) (24) AC (Branch)

Assigned (25) IX BC-Ninth AF (Command and Air Force) (26) 416 Bomb (L) (Group) (27) 668 Bomb (L) (Squadron) (28) AAF Station 170 (Station)

Attached for flying (29) — (Command and Air Force) (30) — (Group) (31) — (Squadron) (32) — (Station)

Original rating (33) Pilot (Rating) (34) 6/26/43 (Date) Present rating (35) Pilot (Rating) (36) 6/26/43 (Date) Instrument rating (37) 12/10/43 (Date)

First Pilot Hours:
(at the time of this accident)

(38) This type (A-20)	445:15	(42) Instrument time last 6 months	—
(39) This model (A-20G)	320:20	(43) Instrument time last 30 days	—
(40) Last 90 days	122:55	(44) Night time last 6 months	—
(41) Total	719:55	(45) Night time last 30 days	—

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE NF AMW 9-4

DAMAGE					(49) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(46) Aircraft	W S				Complete wreck.
(47) Engine(s)	W S	W S			
(48) Propeller(s)	W S	W S			

(50) Weather at the time of accident Visibility 2-3 miles, 4 to 6/10 clouds at 1,000 feet

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

(52) Cleared from AAF Station 170 (53) To AAF Station 170 (54) Kind of clearance Operational

(55) Pilot's mission Combat 05

(56) Nature of accident Wheels up crash landing. 05

(57) Cause of accident Materiel / Failure of left engine 01 06 40

(58) Has AAF Form 54 been submitted? No. It is being submitted.

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DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

NARRATIVE:

First Lieutenant Robert D. Lesher, 0-684361, took off at 1755 31 July 1944, on an operational mission. After the assembly, the formation proceeded enroute approximately five minutes when, the pilot's attention was called to the fact that his left engine was smoking. Three minutes later, the left engine failed completely. The pilot immediately attempted to determine the cause of the failure, but being unable to do so, immediately turned out of the formation and feathered the propeller of the left engine. The failure occured at an altitude of approximately 1,000 feet; in the turn and during the interval the pilot was attempting to determine the cause of the failure, the aircraft had lost altitude to approximately 600 feet above the ground. The pilot attempted to fly the aircraft on the one good engine by using a manifold pressure of 35 - 40 Hg and an RPM of 2300, whichis not the full military power of the engine. The cylinder head temperature on the good engine was 215 degrees Centigrade, (maximum allowable temperature 248 degrees for five minutes). the pilot thinking that the engine was overheating, partly opened the cowling flaps, thereby increasing the drag on the airplane. Unable to maintain level flight, the pilot jettisoned his bombs in an open field in order to reduce the weight of the aircraft. In spite of the fact that the bombs were jettisoned, the aircraft continued to lose altitude. Seeing that a crash landing was inevitable, the pilot set course for an open wheat field, which he overshot and crash landed wheels up, in the last third of the field. The plane skidded through a hedgerow and ditch, where, it is believed, the plane sustained severe structural damage. After striking the ditch, the plane careened on the ground about 90 degrees from the original direction of landing. The aircraft did not somersault or burn.

Investigation of the wreckage revealed the following facts:

1. The rudder trim tab control was set at 5 degree right rudder.
2. Left propeller was feathered.
3. All electrical switches were off.
4. Flaps were full down.
5. Wheels were up.

RESPONSIBILITY:

It is the opinion of the committee that the failure of the left engine was a contributing factor to the accident. However, it is believed that if the recommendations listed below had been carried out, the pilot would have been able to maintain flight on one engine and thereby make a satisfactory landing on an airdrome.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That upon failure of one engine, the pilot should maintain straight and level flight without attempting to make any turns. The fact being that altitude is lost in turns.

2. That full military power 01 should be obtained from the one good engine regardless of what the engine instruments indicate. Previous experience has shown that engines can be operated for a short period of time at higher instrument indications than that which is allowable by factory publications. If the pilot had not cracked his engine cowling flaps, there 06 would have been less drag, thereby increasing the possibility of keeping the aircraft in straight and level flight.

Signature .....
Investigating Officer

3. The pilot should jettison his bombs immediately upon engine failure making certain that he jettisons them over open country.

.....

.....

Date .....

Hq SOS USAPP/6-43/15M/10404

RESTRICTED

INCLOSURES: 6

Inclosure #1 - Statement of Pilot.
Inclosure #2 - Statement of Gunner.
Inclosure #3 - Statement of Engineering Officer.
Inclosure #4 - Statement of Crew C hief.
Inclosure #5 - Statement of Technical Inspector.
Inclosure #6 - Photographs.

APPROVED:

Theodore R. Aylesworth
THEODORE R. AYLESWORTH,
Lt.Col., Air Corps,
Commanding.

Theodore R. Aylesworth
THEODORE R. AYLESWORTH, Lt.Col., AC

Walter W. Farmer
WALTER W. FARMER, Lt.Col., AC

Harold A. Radetsky
HAROLD A. RADETSKY, Major, AC

Kenneth T. Roney
KENNETH T. RONEY, Major, AC

(Date) 5 August 1944

1 August 1944

S T A T E M E N T

Shortly after take-off the cylinder head temperature was at 215°. I cut back on the manifold pressure and RPM. The temperature dropped to 200°. On leaving the field on course, I pulled 30 inches manifold pressure and 2000 RPM. About 5 minutes from the field, Lt Singletery called me on the radio and told me that he noticed my left engine smoking. I was flying at 1000 ft. I acknowledged the radio message and checked my instruments. My cylinder head te mperature was 190° and my oil temperature and pressure was normal. I called my turret gunner and asked him to check and see if the left engine was smoking. He replied that the left engine was not smoking bad. I told him to watch the engine.

About 3 minutes later the left engine quit. I fell out of formation. I switched gas tanks and started to feather the left engine. After 3 attempts, the engine finally feathered. I trimmed the aircraft for normal flight. I had lost altitude till about 600 ft flying at 160 MPH. I proceeded to make a 180° turn to come back to the field. The aircraft was still losing altitude. I had advanced my RPM to 2300 and I was pulling between 35 and 40 inches of mercury. My cylinder head temperature rose rapidly to 215° or 220°. I was afraid to use more power for fear of detonation of the right engine. I cracked my cowl flap a little more to lower the cylinder head temperature.

About 400 ft I saw that I was still losing altitude. I decided to jettison my bombs. I jettisoned my bombs in an open field. At this time I was at 300 ft and still losing altitude flying at an airspeed of 160 MPH. For level flight my airspeed dropped to 150 MPH. I used full flaps but neglected to release my escape hatch. My gunners had time enough to as ume crash landing stations as I gave the order warning them to prepare for a crash landing. I saw an open field ahead and I crash landed. Upon crash landing the turret gunner sustained a broken leg. The tunnel gunner could not remove the injured gunner by him self so he came forward to assist me out of the cockpit. The two of us helped the injured turret gunner out of the aircraft.

Robert D. Lesher

ROBERT D. LESHER,
1st Lt., Air Corps.

Incl. #1

31 July 1944

STATEMENT

Our take-off was normal and everything was routine as we were climbing to join our flight. At about 1200 ft our left engine started smoking and finally cut out. After about two minutes of this, the pilot feathered the prop and cut the engine. He then called us on the interphone and explained the situation, telling us not to worry as he was going to land as soon as he could locate a suitable landing field.

The weight was evidently too great for the one engine and we started loosing altitude rapidly. At about 400 ft the pilot jettisoned the bombs. This failed to alter the situation. The pilot again called us and told us to prepare for a crash landing. The plane was losing altitude so rapidly that we were not completely ready for the crash landing when the pilot set it down in a small wheat field. The plane traveled across this field, hit a small ditch, then crossed into a cabbage field and stopped.

/s/ HAROLD R. HEDRICK
/t/ HAROLD R. HEDRICK,
S/Sgt., Air Corps.

" A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY"

GERALD M. MCNULTY,
Captain, Air Corps,
Operations Officer.

Incl. #2

31 July 1944

STATEMENT

I have made thorough investigation and determined that all possible precautions had been taken to fit this airplane, A-20G-30 AAF No. 43-9745, for safe flight prior to take-off and no mechanical defects existed other than those shown on the AAF Form 1A.

Arnold G. Harrison

ARNOLD A. HARRISON,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Engineering Officer.

Incl. #3

31 July 1944

S T A T E M E N T

I hereby certify that all necessary inspections and maintenance had been performed and all defects were properly shown on AAF Form 41 B and AAF Form 1A prior to the last flight of airplane A-20G-30, AAF No. 43-9745.

Charles U Blanchard

T/Sgt Charles U. Blanchard
Crew Chief.

Incl. #4.

S-T-A-T-E-M-E-N-T 5 August 1944

Following the crash-landing of A-20G aircraft No 43-9745 on 31 July 1944, an examination of the left engine which failed following take-off, revealed that the exhaust valve stem on No 13 cylinder had broken off, allowing the valve to drop into the cylinder barrel. This knocked the head from cylinder and apparently caused sufficient internal damage to the engine to cause it to fail completely. The engine was not disassembled to see the extent of the internal damage.

Subject engine, AAF Serial No 42-175181, was overhauled at Mobile Air Depot 20 January 1944 at 174:00 hours for sudden stoppage of engine. (T.O. 02-1-15) Time on engine since overhaul is 144:50 hours of which 95:25 hours was combat time.

No evidence of sabotage could be detected upon inspection of the engine.

Kenneth T. Roney

KENNETH T. RONEY,
Major, Air Corps,
ASN 0-430182,
Technical Inspector,
Hq, 416th Bomb Gp (L).

Incl #5.

RESTRICTED

E-R-2

HEADQUARTERS
416TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)
Office of the Commanding Officer

APO 140, U.S. Army,
6 August 1944.

SUBJECT: Transmittal of AAF Form 14.

TO : Commanding General, IX Bomber Command, APO 140, U. S. Army.

F Transmitted herewith is the AAF Form 14 (in quadruplicate) on accident of First Lieutenant Robert D. Lesher, in aircraft number 43-9745. 360.33

For the Commanding Officer:

GEORGE SCHENKEIN,
Captain, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

Incl:
AAF Form 14 and inclosures (in quadruplicate).

E-J-4

360.33 1st Ind.
HEADQUARTERS IX BOMBER COMMAND, APO 140, U. S. ARMY, 11 August 1944.

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

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

For the Commanding General:

RICHARD D. SANDERS,
Brig. Gen., U.S.A.,
Chief of Staff.

12 AUG 1944

7 Incls: n/c (1 cy ea w/d)

RESTRICTED

360.33 2nd Ind. E-I-2

HEADQUARTERS, NINTH AIR FORCE (REAR) APO 696, US Army, 18 August 1944.

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

Report and recommendations of A/c Accident Committee approved.

For the Commanding General:

Harold L. Carter

HAROLD L. CARTER
Lt Colonel, AGD,
Asst Adj General

7 Incls: n/c (2 cy ea w/d)



(GAD-17-2-416) (31-JULY-44) (A-20 CRASH)



(GAD-17-6-416) (31-JULY-44) (A-20-CRASH)



(GAD-17-3-416) (31-JULY-44) (A-20 CRASH)





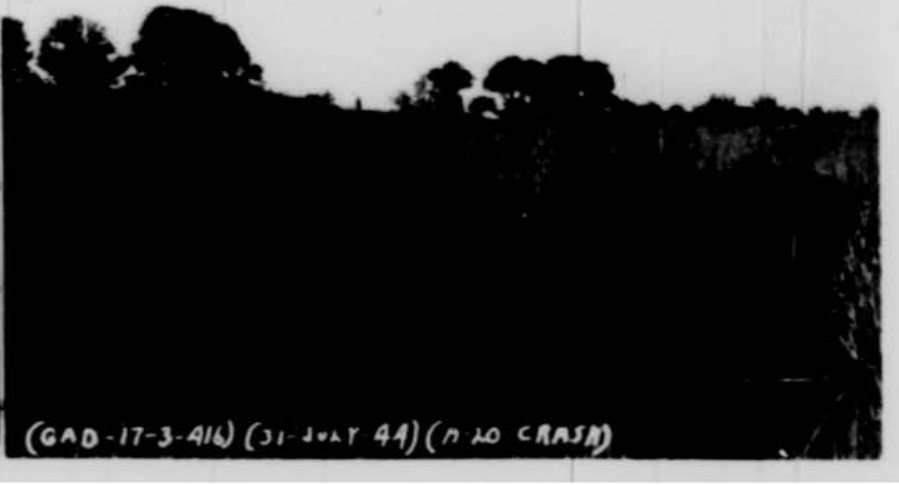
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(GAD-17-2-416) (31-JULY-44) (A-20 CRASH)

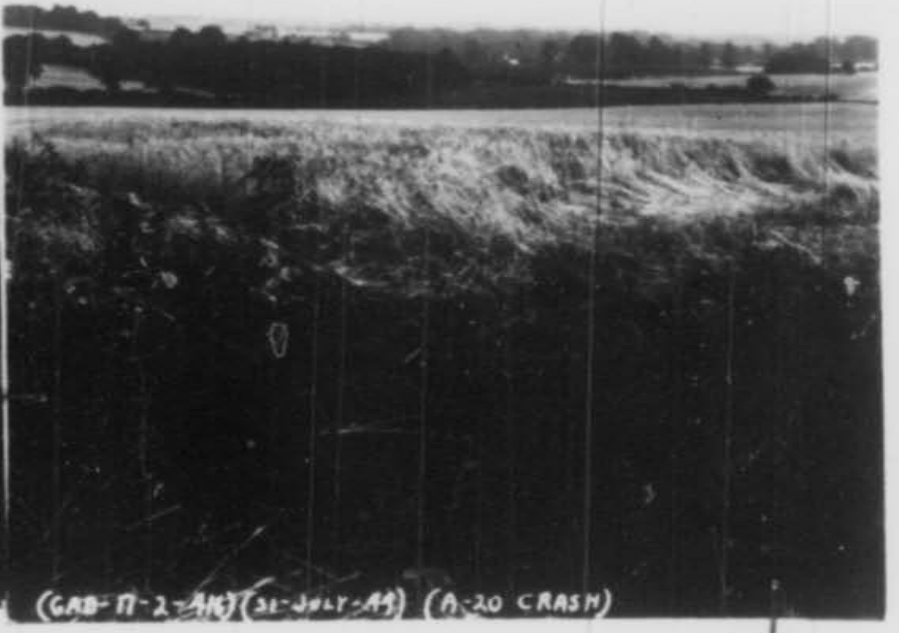


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(GAD-17-3-416) (31-JULY 44) (A 20 CRASH)




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(GAD-17-6-416) (31-JULY-44) (A-20-CRASH)


(GAD-17-3-416) (31-JULY-44) (A-20 CRASH)



(GAD-17-2-416) (31-JULY-44) (A-20 CRASH)



(GAD-17-6-416) (31-JULY-44) (A-20-CRASH)



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(GAD-17-2-416) (31-JULY-44) (A-20 CRASH)



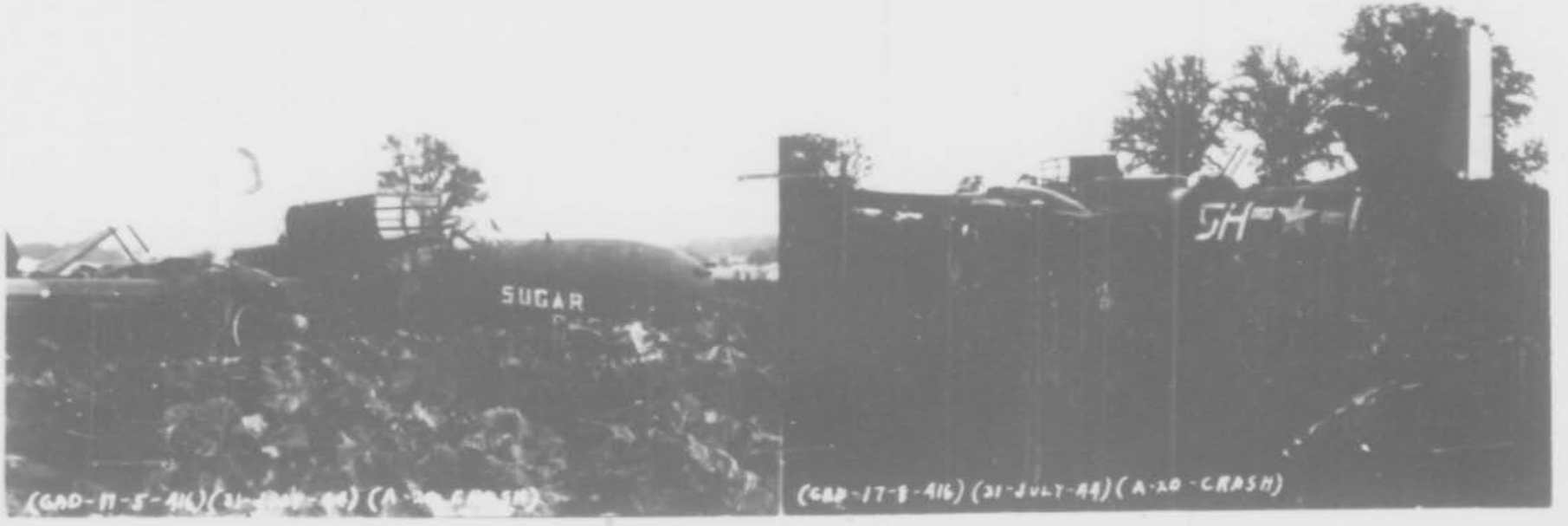
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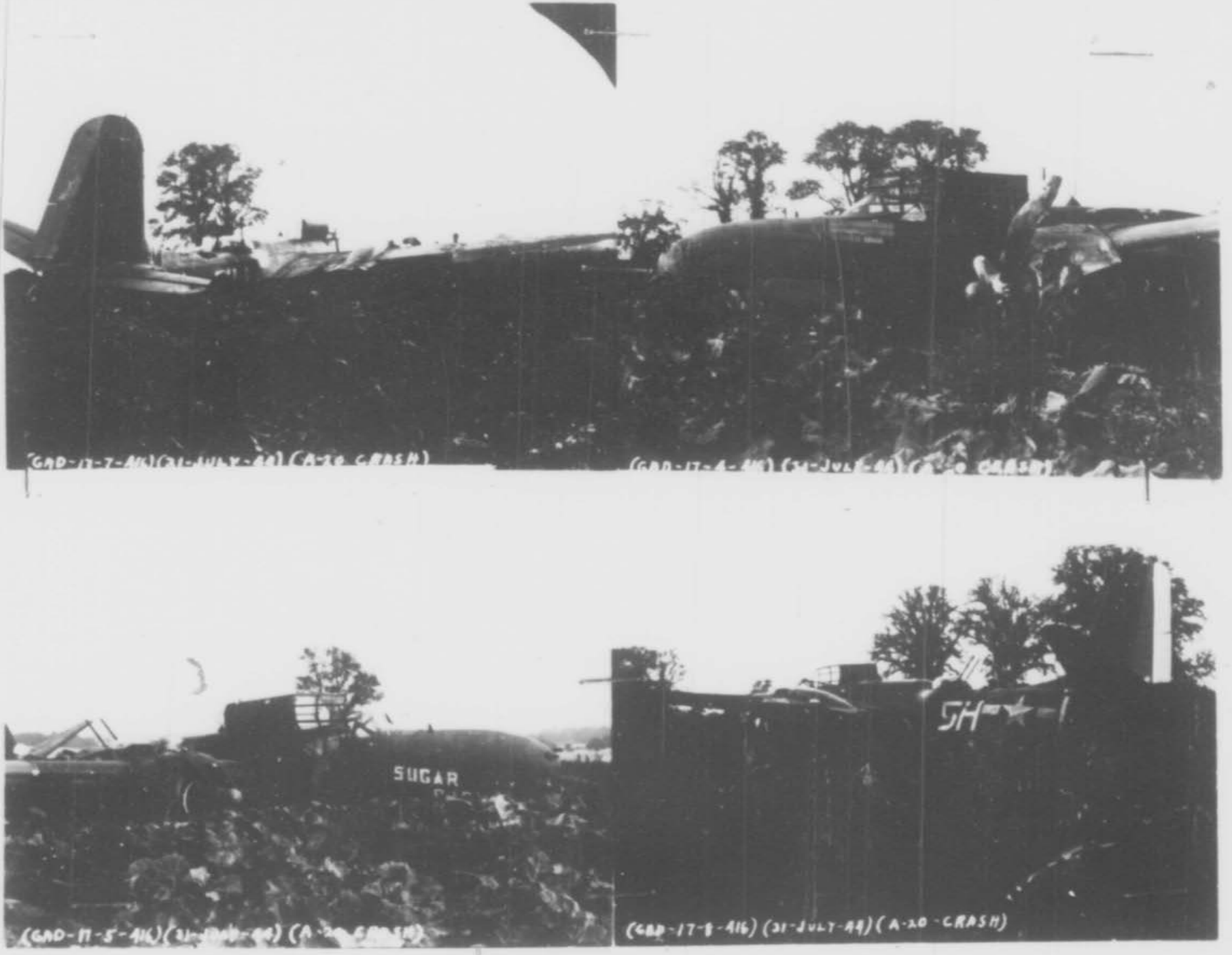


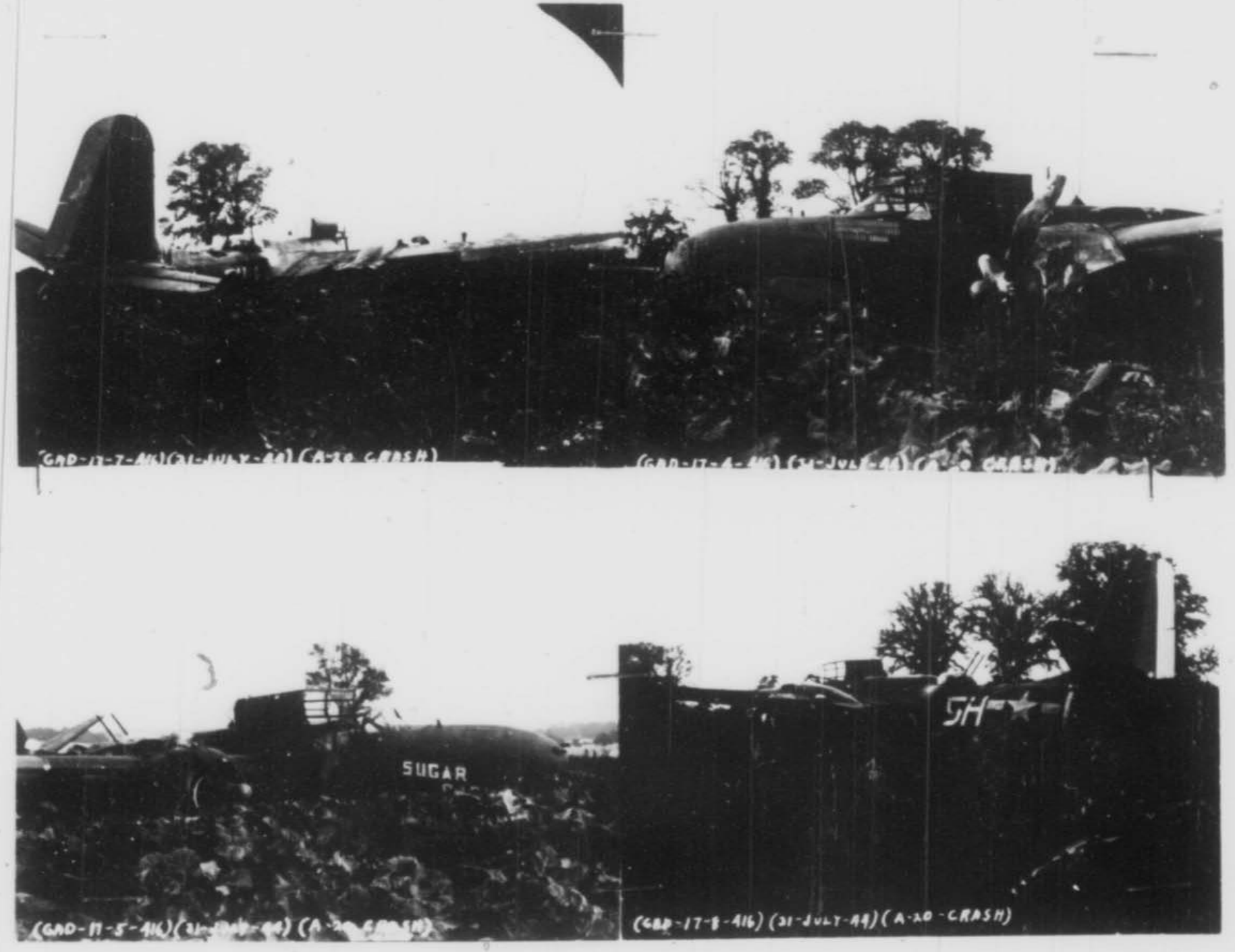
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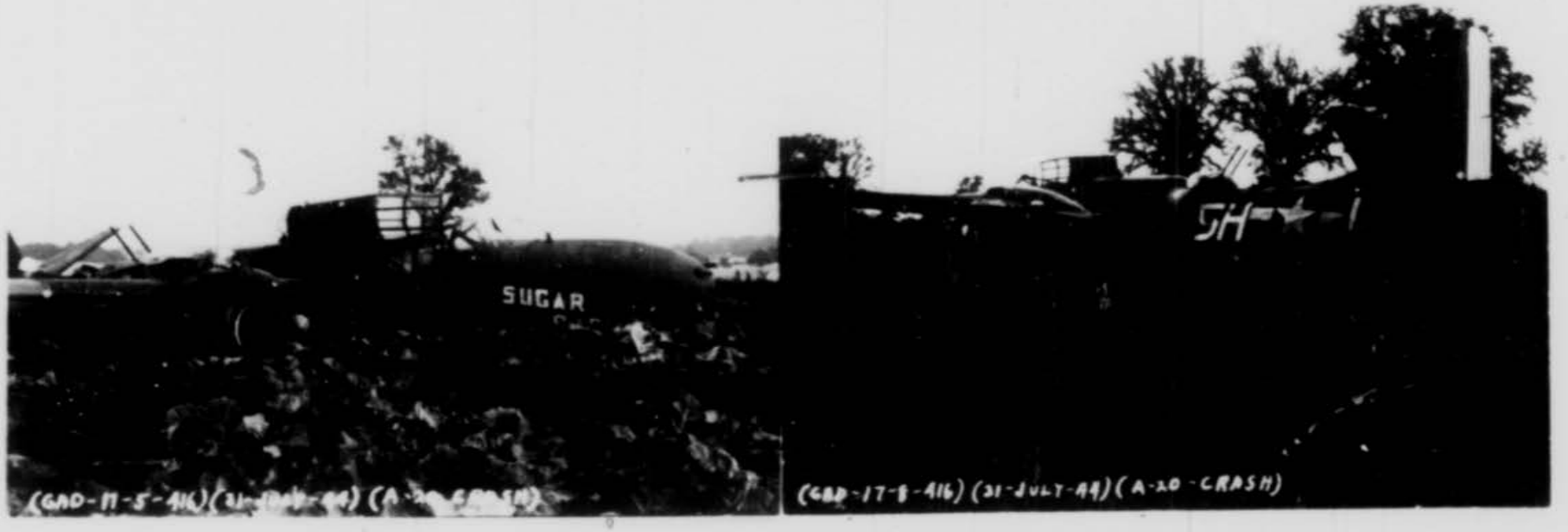

SUGAR
SH-★-I


SUGAR
5H ★ I


SUGAR
5H



(GAD-17-7-416)(31-JULY-44)(A-20 CRASH)



(GAD-17-8-416)(31-JULY-44)(A-20-CRASH)


(GAD-17-F-48) (31-JULY-44) (A-20 CRASH)


(GAD-17-1-AR) (31-JULY-44) (A-20 CRASH)


(GAD-17-1-48) (31-JULY-44) (A-20 CRASH)