

Accident No. 5-11-7-17

Date

Checked by E.S. 11-20

Analyzed by \_\_\_\_\_

Copied for Wright  
Field by No Copy

Notes \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

334710-4475



DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

**NARRATIVE:**

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Board has thoroughly investigated this accident and reviewed all data concerning it, arriving at the following decision:

F/O Field was flying #3 position in a four ship flight starting out on a dive bombing mission. Approximately ten minutes after take off while in formation and climbing on course, the number 4 man noticed a spurt of white vaporish smoke come out of the left engine of the number 3 ship and shortly thereafter an orange yellow flame came out of this same left engine extending back along the left boom. The flame appeared to originate around the leading edge of the wing and extended back past the supercharger. Other members of the flight did not see any smoke from these flames and stated that prior to the fire there was no sign of black smoke such as a back-fire would make.

At the same time that the fire was first seen by the number 4 man, F/O Field called the flight leader and told him that his left engine was on fire. This is the last time that F/O Field talked on the radio. The flight leader instructed F/O Field to pull his left mixture control back, feather up the left engine, keep the airplane flying and if possible to skid it so the flames would not be going toward the cockpit. The flight leader repeated instructions several times but F/O Field's airplane started losing altitude, flew through the tops of several broken clouds and appeared to get out of control. A few seconds later the airplane was seen to do two barrel rolls and crash into the side of a mountain. Examination of the wreckage showed that neither prop was feathered and that the pilot had not apparently attempted to bail out.

**RESPONSIBILITY:**

It is the opinion of the board that the fire was caused by material failure of unknown origin. Because of the condition of the burned, charred wreckage strung out over a large area and the fact that no malfunction was noted prior to the fire, it is impossible for this board to ascertain just where the material failure was. With no evidence to support our belief, it is impossible for us to submit an "Unsatisfactory Report" on any specific material failure.

If the pilot had been more experienced in the technique of single engine operation in emergency, it is believed he would have been able to get away from the airplane by use of parachute. The possibility of smoke covering the instruments in the cockpit or extreme heat in the cockpit might have influenced the pilot in his actions.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Because of the unknown origin of the fire the board has no recommendations to make concerning the material failure. We do believe however, that again emphasis be placed on the briefing of pilots for single engine operation and the importance of quickly bailing out if there is a bad fire that is out of control.

*George L. Ross*  
GEORGE L. ROSS, Major, A.C.  
President Accident Board

*Theron J. Graves*  
THERON J. GRAVES, Capt., A.C.  
Member Accident Board

*John L. Manley*  
JOHN L. MANLEY, Capt., A.C.  
Member Accident Board

Date 13 November 1944

**12 Incls: (Accident: F/O John R. Field, 7 Nov 1944).**

**Incl. 1 - AAF Form 14**

**Incl. 2 - Operations Order**

**Incl. 3 - Surgeon Statement (Prior)**

**Incl. 4 - Surgeon Statement (Following)**

**Incl. 5 - Engineering Officer Statement**

**Incl. 6 - Statement of No Fault or Neglect**

**Incl. 7 - Flight Leader Statement**

**Incl. 8 - Statement of #2 Position Man**

**Incl. 9 - Statement of #4 Position Man**

**Incl. 10- Statement of Lt. C. E. Tillapaugh**

**Incl. 11- Statement of Destruction of AAF Forms I & IA**

**Incl. 12- Photographs (two views)**



HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FIELD  
METROPOLITON AIRPORT  
VAN NUYS, CALIFORNIA

VANSA/cbs

10 November 1944.

C E R T I F I C A T E

1. This is to certify that following aircraft accident 7 November 1944, F/O JOHN R. FIELD, ASN T-4042 was found to have died in aircraft accident. Death was the result of multiple compound comminuted fractures of skull, spine, pelvis and lower extremities, and evisceration of cranium, thorax and abdomen.

*Cyrus B. Slease*  
CYRUS B. SLEASE,  
Captain, MC, (FS),  
Squadron Surgeon.

## STATEMENT

### STATEMENT OF FLIGHT LEADER:

I was assigned to lead a flight on dive bombing and after briefing the students, whom I had flown with only a few times before, we took off at 1520. The students joined so efficiently in formation that I started climbing on course instead of circling.

I headed north for a while and then turned right to 20° to avoid a cloud at about 3000 up to 5000 ft. We were climbing steadily in good formation and were about 1000 ft. above the cloud tops when F/O Field in #3 position called and said his left engine was on fire. I called and said to cut off his mixture control and feather up and got no answer. He seemed to be feathering all right but the fire still burned as bad as ever and I called again and again telling him to cut his mixture control and head north where it was clearer weather. He settled down immediately and headed north but couldn't hold his altitude and started into the clouds. He looked like he was slipping into his good engine and maybe that is why he lost altitude so fast.

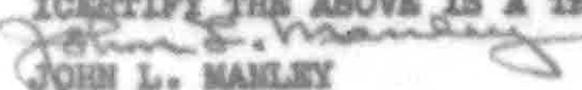
I called the Controller and declared an emergency, requested the radio cleared and turned on my emergency IFF. Then he started into the cloud banks and I told him to bail out several times. He didn't answer but he seemed to have left the ship because it rolled to the left twice and crashed into the mountain below. I saw the big flash of fire and told the Controller it had crashed.

The Controller asked for a carrier fix and I called #4 man to call a fix on "D" channel, then I told the #2 and #4 men to circle the spot and #2 to turn on his emergency IFF. I turned mine off and tried to go below the overcast to find the crash but couldn't because of haze and mountains.

I came back up and gave a M heading to San Antonio Peak and to Murco Airbase then we all circled and hunted for smoke column coming thru the clouds. None came up and the Controller finally sent us back to base to land.

/s/ RICHARD E. JENNINGS  
1st Lt., A.C.

CERTIFY THE ABOVE IS A TRUE COPY:

  
JOHN L. MANLEY  
Capt., A.C.  
Operations Officer

## STATEMENT

### STATEMENT OF NO.#2 MAN:

We took off at 1620 and joined formation, then proceeded north to the bombing range. We made a right turn to pass some clouds, then started to climb. We were above clouds at 6,000 ft. I first knew that 167 was in trouble when he called on the radio. His left engine was in flames and he was losing altitude. Flight leader called 167 and told him to cut his mixture control and head north. The fire did not go out and as he was losing altitude the flight leader repeated a number of times to bail out. The last I saw of the ship was when he disappeared in the clouds.

When I first noticed that the engine was on fire I turned on my emergency I.F.F. and started up to altitude. I also turned to "D" channel and transmitted for a fix. When I reached 10,000 ft. I turned on my contactor clock and continued circling until advised by the controller to return to the field. At no time did I see any smoke on the ground.

/s/ ROBERT D. GUSTOFSON  
2nd Lt., A.C.

I CERTIFY THE ABOVE IS A TRUE COPY:

*John L. Hanley*

JOHN L. HANLEY  
Capt., A.C.  
Operations Officer

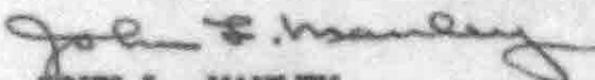
STATEMENT

STATEMENT OF NO.#4 MAN:

Flight number 5-1 took off at 1520 on a normal dive bombing mission. A normal join up was made and the flight leader started climbing on course. We were on top of clouds when 5-3's left engine let out a burst of smoke and caught on fire. 5-3 immediately called the flight leader and told him of his trouble. The flight leader immediately told him to feather the left engine. The number 3 man seemed to hold the plane steady for a while and then started turning to the left losing altitude. Then the ship seemed to do two barrel rolls and disappeared into the clouds (flight leader told him to bail out). The number 2 man then climbed up to altitude and turned on emergency IFF and contactor clock. I followed and transmitted for a fix. The flight leader went down but due to haze was unable to hold the crash in sight. We circled for 30 minutes trying to locate some signs of fire or smoke but was unable to find anything due to clouds and haze.

/s/ VICTOR R. HAVEN  
2nd Lt., A.C.

I CERTIFY THE ABOVE TO BE A TRUE COPY:

  
JOHN L. MANLEY  
Capt., A.C.  
Operations Officer

## STATEMENT

### STATEMENT OF 1ST LT. C. E. TILLAPAUGH:

I was flying a P-38 from 1505, November 7, 1944, to 1605. I had the radio on a tactical channel and overheard someone call the controller to clear the air for an emergency. Then I overheard the following (from one man, I presume): "Feather that engine, 5-4. That's it. Now slip the fire away from you." Then there was a pause and then: "Bail out, bail out, bail out, ...." This voice then called 5-3 to switch to an emergency channel and transmit for a voice fix; failing to contact 5-3, he called 5-2 and had him do it. He had given the approximate position as north-east of the field (Metro. Airport) over the mountains and I had headed up that way.

The flight leader then called that he had lost sight of the ship in trouble and was asking if any of the rest of the flight could see him. Suddenly I heard 5-4 say, "I'm all right and right below you or I'm right below you." The flight leader said, "O.K." and sounded happier. I thought that the plane in question had recovered all right and everything was under control again so I continued on my mission. As I was gradually getting out of hearing, I heard the flight leader report a crash and (or) a fire near San Antonio mountain. I couldn't understand the seemingly conflicting reports and discounted it as perhaps a forest fire and finished my mission and returned to the field.

/s/ C. E. TILLAPAUGH  
1st Lt., A.C.

I CERTIFY THE ABOVE IS A TRUE COPY:

*John L. Manley*

JOHN L. MANLEY  
Capt., A.C.  
Operations Officer

441st AAF BASE UNIT  
OFFICE OF THE OPERATIONS OFFICER  
METROPOLITAN AIRPORT  
VAN NUYS, CALIFORNIA

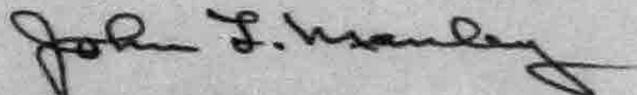
VANCO/jlm

7 November 1944

SUBJECT: Destruction of AAF Form I and IA

TO : All concerned.

I certify that the AAF Form I and IA for F/O JOHN R FIELD, in aircraft P38-J-1010, number 42-67699 were totally destroyed in the aircraft accident which occurred on 7 November 1944.



JOHN L. MANLEY  
Capt., A.C.  
Operations Officer



HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FIELD  
 OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER  
 METROPOLITAN AIRPORT  
 VAN NUYS, CALIFORNIA

VANAS/jto/mg

11 November 1944

STATEMENT: ENGINEERING OFFICER, Regarding accident P-38J-1010, 42-67699, on 7 November 1944.

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| 1. Structural defects which caused this accident:      | Unknown |
| 2. Mechanical defects which caused this accident:      | Unknown |
| 3. Prior defects which are pertinent to this accident: | None    |
| 4. Indication of tampering:                            | Unknown |
| 5. Indications of sabotage:                            | Unknown |
| 6. Investigation report:                               |         |

The pilot took off on a dive bombing mission flying number 3 position at approximately 1515. About 15 minutes after takeoff, at about 5000 feet, the pilot reported fire in his left engine. The flight leader stated that he feathered his left engine and headed for a clear space in the clouds. He started spiraling toward his dead engine, made a two barrell roll, and hit the mountain. The plane exploded and burned causing complete distruction.

The plane had had a 100 hour inspection completed 8 hours and 55 minutes flying time before the accident. It had been test hopped and checked by Captin W. T. Miles. It made five flights on the 6 November and was written up for radio out of commission twice and landing gear warning light once. These defects were corrected. The crash occurred on the first flight of the 7 November 1944.

Examination of cockpit: examination impossible because of distruction of airplane.

Examination of left engine: examination impossible because of distruction of airplane.

Examination of both props: The propellers were in low pitch when the plane crashed.

*James T. Ompsey*  
 JAMES T. OMPSEY,  
 2nd Lt., Air Corps,  
 Engineering Officer, Sect. "A"



HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FIELD  
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER  
METROPOLITAN AIRPORT  
VAN NUYS, CALIFORNIA

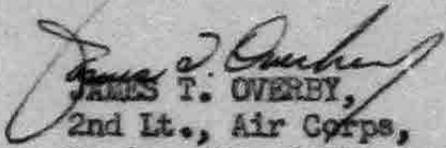
VANAS/jto/ng

11 November 1944

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, James T. Overby, 2nd Lt., Air Corps, Engineering Officer of the 441st Army Air Field Base Unit, do hereby certify that, as far as I can determine, the following listed Air Force property was damaged through no fault or neglect of the flight line or maintenance personnel of this base.

Aircraft Type P-38J-10LO, 42-67699

  
JAMES T. OVERBY,  
2nd Lt., Air Corps,  
Engineering Officer, Sect. "A"



HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FIELD  
METROPOLITON AIRPORT  
VAN NUYS, CALIFORNIA

VANSA/cbs

8 November 1944.

C E R T I F I C A T E

1. This is to certify that JOHN R. FIELD, F/O, AC, ASN T-4042, was in good physical condition prior to aircraft accident at 1530 PWT 7 November 1944.

2. F/O Field was qualified for flying on WD AGO Form 64 on 4 November 1944 at Metropolitan Airport, Van Nuys, California.

*Cyrus B. Slease*  
CYRUS B. SLEASE,  
Captain, MC, (F3),  
Squadron Surgeon.



441ST AAF BASE UNIT  
Office of the Operations Officer  
Metropolitan Airport, Van Nuys, California

JLM/wdj

7 November 1944

E X T R A C T

OPERATIONS ORDER )

NO.....182 )

\* \* \* \* \*

1. The following named pilots of this organization will perform duties as indicated below:

P-38J-10LO  
42-67699 FIELDS, JOHN R., F/O T 1523 1530 (CRASH)

By Order of Colonel CHENNAULT:

JOHN L. MANLEY,  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Operations Officer,  
441st AAF Base Unit.

OFFICIAL:

/s/t/JOHN L. MANLEY,  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Operations Officer,  
441st AAF Base Unit.

A TRUE EXTRACT COPY:

*John L. Manley*

JOHN L. MANLEY,  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Operations Officer,  
441st AAF Base Unit.



HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FIELD  
Office of the Commanding Officer  
Metropolitan Airport  
Van Nuys, California

VANOO/jla/vg

360.33/174

13 November 1944

**SUBJECT:** Transmittal of A.A.F. Form 14 and Allied Data

**TO :** Chief, Flying Safety--AAF  
Winston-Salem 1  
North Carolina

1. Transmitted herewith, A.A.F. Form 14 and allied data pertaining to the aircraft accident of F/O John R. Field, in P-38-J-10-LO, Army 42-67699.

2. Said mishap occurred 10 miles northeast of Van Nuys, California, 7 November 1944, 1530 Pacific War Time.

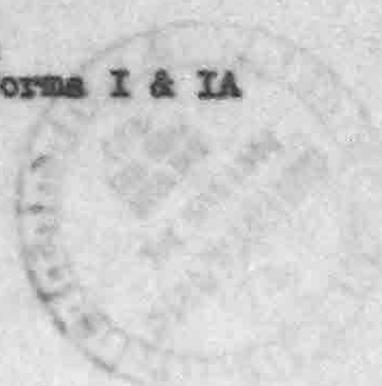
For the Commanding Officer:

*Elvena M. Ulrich*

ELVENA M. ULRICH  
Captain, A.C.  
Adjutant

12 Incls:

- Incl 1 - AAF Form 14
- Incl 2 - Operation Order
- Incl 3 - Surgeon Statement (Prior)
- Incl 4 - Surgeon Statement (Following)
- Incl 5 - Engineering Officer Statement
- Incl 6 - Statement of No Fault or Neglect
- Incl 7 - Flight Leader Statement
- Incl 8 - Statement of #2 Position Man
- Incl 9 - Statement of #4 Position Man
- Incl 10 - Statement of Lt. C. E. Tillapaugh
- Incl 11 - Statement of Destruction of AAF Forms I & IA
- Incl 12 - Photographs (two views)



INCOMING MESSAGE

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES FOR ACTION AA ✓

OFFICE OF FLYING SAFETY FOR INFO INTELL

WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA FOR FILE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE 8 NOV. 44

T.W.X.

TELEGRAM

ADM NET

FROM CHENAULT CO METROPOLITAN AIRPORT VAN NUYS CALIF 080345Z  
TO CHIEF FLYING SAFETY AAF WINSTON SALEM NORTH CAROLINA

GRNC

WANCO 161 PD IN ACCORDANCE WITH AAF REG 62-14 THE FOLLOWING AIRCRAFT  
ACCIDENT PRELIMINARY REPORT IS BEING SUBMITTED PD

A 7 NOVEMBER 1944 CMZ 1530 PWT CMA 10 MILES NORTH EAST VAN NUYS  
CALIFORNIA

B PILOT JOHN R FIELD CMA F DASH O CMA AUS CMA AC CMA FOURTH AF CMA 441ST  
AAF BASE UNIT CMA METROPOLITAN AIRPORT CMA VAN NUYS CMA CALIFORNIA

C FIRE IN THE AIR CMA AIRCRAFT CRASHED INTO MOUNTAINS PD F DASH O FIELD  
REPORTED BY RADIO THAT HIS LEFT ENGINE WAS ON FIRE CMA WHICH WAS ALSO  
OBSERVED BY OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FORMATION ~~FLIGHT~~ FLIGHT PD EXAMINATION  
OF WRECKAGE REVEALED THAT THE PILOT DID NOT ATTEMPT TO BAIL OUT PD CAUS  
OF FIRE AND CRASH IS UNDETERMINED AT THIS TIME PD

D PILOT FATALLY INJURED CMA DID NOT BAIL OUT

E DIVE BOMBING

F WEATHER ESTIMATED FIVE THOUSAND BROKEN CLOUDS CMA THREE THOUSAND SCA-  
TTERED CMA THREE MILE VISIBILITY DUE TO HAZE

G 42-67699 CMA P DASH 38 CMA J 10 LO

H 441ST AAF BASE UNIT CMA METROPOLITAN AIRPORT VAN NUYS CMA CALIF

I AIRCRAFT AND ENGINES TOTALLY DESTROYED

J MATERIAL FAILURE UNKNOWN AT THIS TIME DUE TO THE TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF

376620-44078

COPY LOG NO. 726

11-7-17 1/2

45-11-7-17

INCOMING MESSAGE

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES FOR ACTION \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE OF FLYING SAFETY FOR INFO \_\_\_\_\_

WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA FOR FILE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

T.W.X.

TELEGRAM

ADM NET

PAGE.....2.....

THE AIRCRAFT HOWEVER FURTHER EXAMINATION OF THE WRECKAGE WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED

K AIRCRAFT DESTROYED BEYOND REPAIR CMA WILL BE RECLAIMED BY THIS STATION FOR SALVAGE

L NO PRIVATE PROPERTY DAMAGE CMA AIRCRAFT CRASHED IN ANGELES  
MXX NATIONAL FOREST

M AFACG NOTIFIED

N GROUP ONE ACCIDENT

REGION FIVE OFFICE OF FLYING SAFETY NOTIFIED

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES  
OFFICE OF FLYING SAFETY  
WINSTON-SALEM 1, N.C.

**RESTRICTED**

DATE 23 Nov 44

THIS CIRCULATION SLIP WILL REMAIN WITH AND BECOME A PART OF THE PERMANENT RECORD  
INFORMAL REPLY MAY BE MADE UNDER REMARKS, ALSO ON REVERSE SIDE, TURNING BOTTOM EDGE UP

NO OFFICE  
FLYING SAFETY  
R & S  
NOV 23 1944

TO	FROM	INITIALS	TO	FROM	INITIALS
	CHIEF FLYING SAFETY			SAFETY EDUCATION	
	DEPUTY CHIEF, FLYING SAFETY			MEDICAL SAFETY	
	PLANS & ORGANIZATION		XX	CHIEF OF REGIONS	
	PROGRAMS & REQUIREMENTS			MATERIAL & MAINTENANCE	
	BUDGET & FISCAL			TRAINING & OPERATIONS	
	SAFETY ENFORCEMENT		XX	ACCIDENT ANALYSIS	
	ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES			SQUADRON "A"	
	PERSONNEL (MILITARY)(CIVILIAN)			CLASSIFIED RECORDS	
	SUPPLY & SERVICES			MAIL & RECORDS	
	OFFICE SERVICES				

13:58  
EJ

ACTION DESIRED:

ATTENTIONS Capt. Evans

NECESSARY ACTION \_\_\_\_\_  
COMMENT & FORWARD \_\_\_\_\_  
REPLY \_\_\_\_\_

COORDINATION \_\_\_\_\_  
INITIAL \_\_\_\_\_  
RETURN \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_  
INFORMATION \_\_\_\_\_  
DISPATCH \_\_\_\_\_

11-2-17

**RESTRICTED**



# RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES  
OFFICE OF FLYING SAFETY  
Headquarters Safety Region Five  
PACIFIC BUILDING  
Santa Ana, California

RAA/RMB/vk

Project R5-128

14 Nov 1944

**SUBJECT: P-38 (No. 42-67699) Accident of 7 November 1944, ten miles NE of Van Nuys, California.**

1. **REPORT SUBMITTED BY:** Captain R. A. Ariano & Lt. R. M. Byrne.
2. **DATE SUBMITTED:** 14 November 1944.
3. **DATE OF ACCIDENT:** 7 November 1944.
4. **TIME OF ACCIDENT:** 1530 PWT.
5. **LOCATION OF ACCIDENT:** Ten (10) miles NE of Van Nuys AAF, California.
6. **AIRCRAFT:** Type: P-38J-10LO ACN: 42-67699.
7. **HOME STATION:** Van Nuys AAF, California.
8. **ORGANIZATION:** 441st AAFBU, 4AF.
9. **RESULTS TO AIRCRAFT:** Completely demolished.
10. **HISTORY OF AIRCRAFT & ENGINE:** Subject aircraft was delivered from the factory 29 Oct 1943 and had flown 814:15 hours. On 29 May 1944 a pilot inadvertently raised the gear of this aircraft at the end of the landing roll, causing sudden stoppage of both engines. The aircraft was repaired and the engines changed at San Bernardino AIC and delivered to Van Nuys AAF 2 August 1944. Time on the replacement engine was 216:35.
11. **PILOT:** John E. Field, F/O, Y4042.
12. **HOME STATION:** Van Nuys AAF, California.
13. **ORGANIZATION:** 441st AAFBU, 4AF.
14. **PILOT HISTORY:** F/O Field was rated a pilot 23 May 1944 after completing Primary Training at Visalia, California; Basic Training at Lowery, California and Advanced Training at Luke Field, Arizona. After processing at

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TO: Chief, Safety Region 5, Santa Ana, Calif fr HQ's, SR5, subj: project R5-128, P-38 accident 10 mi NE Van Nuys, Calif, dtd 14 Nov 44, cont'd.

Salinas, California, F/O Field was assigned to P-63's at Portland, Oregon. Upon completion of approximately 78 hours in P-63's he was assigned to Van Nuys for P-38 training. His flying time was as follows: P-38 - 32:55; last 90 days - 60:35; total flying time - 367:58.

15, 16 17: NOT APPLICABLE.

18. NOT APPLICABLE.

19. RESULTS TO CREW: Pilot: John R. Field, F/O, T4042, AAF.  
Organization: 441st AAFSG. Results: Fatal.

20. NARRATION OF EVENTS: F/O Field was #3 man in a four-ship formation of P-38 aircraft which took off from Van Nuys AAF on an authorized dive bombing mission. As the flight was climbing on a course of 20 degrees toward the Huroc bombing and gunnery range, and had been airborne only eight (8) or nine (9) minutes, F/O Field in #3 position called the flight leader and reported that his left engine was on fire. The flight leader told Field to feather the left propeller, shut off the fuel to the engine, and turn toward the north where the visibility and weather were better. F/O Field seemed unable to maintain altitude and the aircraft began going through the tops of broken clouds. As the fire appeared to be very severe, the flight leader ordered F/O Field to bail out. This order was repeated several times. No response was received and a moment later the aircraft went into a roll to the left and disappeared down through the broken clouds. The flight leader, Lt. Jennings, followed the aircraft down into a valley and saw it partially recover before crashing and exploding against the side of a mountain.

21. INVESTIGATION DISCLOSED: 1. Weather and terrain were an important factor in this accident. Weather at the time, in the Van Nuys area, was estimated at 4000 feet broken clouds with scattered clouds at 2000 feet and 3 miles of visibility due to haze; terrain at the scene of the accident was mountainous with peaks and ridges varying in height from 3000 feet to 5600 feet. Temperature in the Van Nuys area was 64, dew point 51, and wind SSW 3 MPH. The flight had attained an altitude of only 6000 feet before crossing these hills, and this lack of safe altitude,

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# RESTRICTED

TO: Chief, Safety Region 5, Santa Ana, Calif fr RSO's, 285, subj: Proj  
85-128, F-38 Accident 10 mi NE Van Nuys, Calif, dtd 14 Nov, cont'd.

combined with the factors of poor visibility and broken clouds gave F/O Field too little chance of keeping his aircraft under control long enough to effect a bail-out.

2. Take-off was on runway 16 and Flight Leader Jennings said that the flight had joined formation so efficiently after take-off that he felt it unnecessary to circle the field and therefore immediately set course for the Murco bombing and gunnery range (approximately 25 degrees magnetic).
3. Subject aircraft, due to its recent dual engine change, was equipped with Allison V1710-51 and 55 engines instead of the 89 and 91 engines installed by the factory in this model.
4. Subject aircraft had been in PLM from 28 October to 5 November for a 100-hour inspection and was test flown on 5 November by an engineering test pilot, Captain Miles. He found it to be in excellent condition and ready for the flight line.
5. The aircraft made five (5) flights on 6 November and the only complaints written up on Form 1A by pilots were failure of landing gear warning light and minor radio difficulties. These complaints were corrected. The crew chief was complimented by several of the pilots on the general performance of the aircraft and engines.
6. On 7 November the aircraft was preflighted as usual at 0600, but made no flights prior to F/O Field's fatal one because of morning ground fog and drizzle and mid-day haze. The aircraft was not again run up by the crew chief before the flight in question occurred but the crew chief stated that approximately 15 minutes had elapsed between starting engines and take-off. The crew chief added that to all appearances F/O Field had performed a satisfactory run-up and mag check.

## RESTRICTED

TO: Chief, Safety Region 5, Santa Ana, Calif fr RSO's, SR5, subj: Proj  
R5-128, P-38 Accident 10 mi NE Van Nuys, Calif, dtd 14 Nov, cont'd.

7. #4 man in the formation saw a wisp of white vapor come from P/O Field's left engine, which was immediately followed by orange-yellow flames that extended almost to the rudder. There was no noticeable smoke.
  8. The flight leader called P/O Field and told him to "Cut his mixture control and feather up". As the severity of the fire increased, the flight leader ordered Field to bail out. The order to bail out was repeated several times and no acknowledgement of either the instructions to feather the left propeller or the orders to bailout was received from Field by any members of the flight.
  9. The crash and explosion was so violent that even the armor plate was shattered into small fragments. The only parts of the aircraft little enough damaged to be checked were the propeller hubs. Disassembly of these showed them both to be set at approximately 2790 RPM.
22. PROBABLE CAUSE: Fire of unknown origin in left engine.
23. CONTRIBUTING FACTORS: Unknown.
24. UNDERLYING CAUSE: Unknown.
25. COMMENTS: It was generally agreed by all participants in the investigation that P/O Field was unable to bail out due to possible loss of orientation in the broken clouds and haze and due to lack of sufficient altitude above the terrain. Also, fumes from the engine fire may have been a factor.
26. RECOMMENDATIONS: The undersigned RSO's made the following recommendations to supervisory personnel:

That in the event of poor or marginal weather, and flying training is to be conducted, extreme care should be exercised by flight leaders in adhering to the local CAA instrument take-off plan, i.e., after take-off assume a heading of 260 degrees magnetic, and climb to designated altitude.

That if aircraft has been on the ground for several hours a crew chief or trainee should run up the aircraft to eliminate any possible ice that may have

RESTRICTED

**RESTRICTED**

TO: Chief, Safety Region 5, Santa Ana, Calif fr HSO's, SRS, subj: Proj  
85-128, P-38 Accident 10 mi NE Van Nuys, Calif, dtd 14 Nov, cont'd.

collected on the plugs or distributor assembly.

Concurrence and assurance that they would be carried  
out was made by supervisory personnel.

**RICHARD A. ARLAND**  
Captain, Air Corps  
Regional Safety Officer

**ROBERT M. BYRNE**  
1st Lt., Air Corps  
Regional Safety Officer

4 Incls  
Incl 1,2,3 statements  
Incl 4 - photos

**RESTRICTED**