

Accident No. 44-3-2-506

Date

Checked by E.S.

Analyzed by R.L.H. 3-24-44

Copied for Wright  
Field by PO

Notes \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

122519-43

Accident No.

Pilot's Name

Allen

Nature Group

13 Forest Landing Equipment

Specific Nature

91 Unusable Gear

Underlying Nature

57 Out of Gas

Cause Group

01 P.E. Judgment

Specific Cause

13 Momentary lapse of mental

Efficient

Underlying Cause

17 Lack of Skill

Cause Group

02 P.E. Technique

Specific Cause

27 Momentary lack of proficiency

Underlying Cause

17 Lack of Skill



WAR DEPARTMENT  
MORRISON FIELD  
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

(1) Place Morrison Field, West Palm Beach, Fla. (2) Date 2 March 1944 (3) Time 2045Z

AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model A-30A (5) A. F. No. 43-8890 (6) Station N.C.A.A.B.

Organization: (7) U.S.A.A.F. (8) 2nd Ferrying (9) 12th Ferrying

(Command and Air Force)

(Group)

(Squadron)

Ferrying Bty

PERSONNEL

FRY

FRY

2175

DUTY	NAME (Last name first)	RATING	SERIAL NO.	RANK	PERSONNEL CLASS	BRANCH	AIR FORCE OR COMMAND	RESULT TO PERSONNEL	USE OF PARACHUTE
(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)
P	Allen, Robert E.	P	0-428928	1st Lt.	01	AAF	ATC	Facial Inj.	No
R	Arigoni, Robert D.	R	31130453	Cpl	30	AAF	ATC	No Inj.	No

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED OR CHANGED,  
TO "RESTRICTED"  
BY AUTHORITY OF CEA 937  
BY JEC DATE 7/2/45

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT

(20) Allen, Robert (21) 0-428928 (22) 1st Lt. (23) 01 (24) AAF  
(Last name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Serial number) (Rank) (Personnel class) (Branch)  
Assigned (25) ATC (26) 2nd Ferrying (27) 12th Ferrying (28) NCAAB Wilmington, Del.  
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)  
Attached for flying (29) ATC (30) 2nd Ferrying (31) 12th Ferrying (32) NCAAB Wilmington, Del.  
(Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)  
Original rating (33) Pilot (34) 10/31/41 Present rating (35) Pilot (36) 10/31/41 Instrument rating (37) 9/1/43  
(Rating) (Date) (Rating) (Date)

FIRST PILOT HOURS:

(at the time of this accident)

(38) This type 60:00 (42) Instrument time last 6 months 42:00  
(39) This model 60:00 (43) Instrument time last 30 days 6:30  
(40) Last 90 days 125:00 (44) Night time last 6 months 20:00  
(41) Total 1100:00 (45) Night time last 30 days None

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

DAMAGE	(49) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(46) Aircraft <u>5</u>	<u>Lost at sea.</u>
(47) Engine(s) <u>5</u>	
(48) Propeller(s) <u>5</u>	

(50) Weather at the time of accident Contact, cumulus 2500 Ft. visibility restricted 6 miles, haze water vapor rising from water. (See attached weather report.)

(51) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident No  
(52) Cleared from Jacksonville (53) To Nassau (54) Kind of clearance 0  
42-1 2631

(55) Pilot's mission Ferry  
50

(56) Nature of accident Ditched at sea.

(57) Cause of accident Navigational error, exhausted fuel supply.

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## DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

### FINDINGS:-

The Board finds 100% Pilot error and poor judgment in navigation.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:-

That AAF Regulations No. 61-4, Subject: "Flying Outside the United States" be complied with in its entirety, without exception, on all aircraft departing the continental limits of the United States.

Signature

*Caray J. Anderson, Jr.*  
CARAY J. ANDERSON, JR.,  
Major, Air Corps.

*Marion J. Cey*  
MARION J. CEY,  
Capt., Air Corps.

*Elmer G. Harn*  
ELMER G. HARN,  
Capt., Air Corps.

Date 8 March 1944.

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INTERVIEW: LT. ROBERT E. ALLEN and CPL. ARIGONI

SURVIVORS OF A-30A #13-8890 CRASH, 1 MARCH 1944

4 March 1944  
(mbd)

Maj. Anderson: We have with us Lt. Allen and Cpl. Arigoni who were unfortunate enough to have to make a forced landing at sea. The purpose of this meeting, Lt. Allen, is to find out the circumstances leading up to your ditching at sea. So, if you will just go ahead and give us the story in your own words, we will ask you a few questions from time to time.

Lt. Allen: We left Wilmington, Del., Wednesday around 1130 in the morning in A-30A #13-8890. We planned to depart the day before but hadn't cleared because of bad weather. We had only about 200 gallons and landed at Raleigh for more gas and I made further weather checks. We took off from Raleigh and landed at Jacksonville approximately 1730 EWT. We sent our RCN message from there. Next morning after. Next morning, after checking weather, we took off approximately five minutes of ten for Nassau. We cleared for West Palm Beach, cleared by radio for Nassau from there, and were going into Nassau with 4 hrs. gas.

Maj. Anderson: How much reserve?

Lt. Allen: I don't know exactly.

Maj. Anderson: Were you briefed at Jacksonville?

Lt. Allen: No, I made the trip four or five times before.

Maj. Anderson: You were not briefed this time?

Lt. Allen: No, this time I had all my necessary maps and radio facility charts.

Capt. Cey: Did you check your radio frequencies to see if everything was O.K. before leaving?

Lt. Allen: We did have some trouble with the radio. Liaison transmitter would just give out a steady humming when we first tried to transmit and the reception was very bad. In an A-30 you have to receive through the compass set in the pilots cockpit. I didn't pay much attention to the radio because it was always noisy and not too good. I received a radio clearance from Morrison Field, steered a course of 125° to Nassau, flew 1 hr. and 10 mins. and sighted nothing on either side. I steered 125° for 20 minutes longer and sighted a large flat island which I knew was not Andros because Andros has a cliff on the Northeast and does not appear to be inhabited. This island which I saw had houses and a road running along the East side. I assumed a compass heading of approximately 90°, turned on the Nassau range but couldn't distinguish a build or a fading volume while trying to work a range problem. I flew reciprocal headings back to the island, turned on Miami and West Palm Beach radio, identifying myself as being in a quadrant between the two stations. I assumed a course of 270° intending to hit the EW leg of the Miami

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Lt. Allen:

range and bracket it to Miami and planned to land at 36th Street Airport.

The next thing I sighted was a reef with a light house on it which I assumed to be Dimini and Cat Cay. After flying for another half hour I did not strike the mainland so I turned the radio range to a station in Cuba but I found I had a scissor quadrant on it and I got the identifying quadrant. I then turned on Ft. Myers and Miami and identified myself as being in an area approximately 100 square miles off the Keys. By this time the bombay tanks were dry. The bombay tank holds 1,000 gals. and is filled through the left outboard tank. Since we only carried 300 gals. in the bombay the left outboard tank was empty. After that I had about 40 gallons of gasoline in the left and right inboard tank. I continued to fly bi-sector heading of Ft. Myers radio range until I got down to 10 minutes gas supply and spotted the S.S. PAULSBORO. Realizing I was too far out to make shore I decided to ditch beside the PAULSBORO. I circled the ship several times, warned my radio man to be prepared for ditching. In the meantime, he had been trying to work a radio fix and contact shore stations so that we could get a heading to shore. I told him to prepare for ditching and got the layout of the radio compartment. He cut the raft down and sat on the floor braced for ditching. I circled the ship once more and got its attention. I came down on the leeward side of the ship, cut both engines, feathered both props, cut all switches and shut the gasoline off. As I settled on the water the ship hit the crest of one wave, skipped in the air and settled in the trough of another burying the nose of the ship in the wave. I hit my head on the instrument panel and was momentarily stunned. I was in water up to my forearms when I revived. I immediately released my belt, opened the hatch and went out the top. I couldn't tell you how I got out exactly, my radio operator got out O.K. When we were 20 yds. from the airplane it nosed down and sank. It stayed afloat from 45 seconds to a minute at the most. We ditched it at 1558 LMT according to my watch. At 1605 they put a boat over for us and at 1615 approximately we were picked up by the tanker, S. S. PAULSBORO. This ship took us to within 16 miles of the Florida coast...west of Tampa...where a Coast Guard cutter intercepted us and picked us up.

Maj. Anderson:

Capt. Finnie, any questions?

Capt. Finnie:

Did you say you flew 90°? How long?

Lt. Allen:

Yes sir. I flew on that approximately 20 minutes I would say. Then I took a reciprocal heading of 125° and held that while I flew back to the first place.

Capt. Finnie:

Reciprocal heading of 125°?

Lt. Allen:

Sir, 330°

Capt. Finnie:

After you flew at 90°?

Lt. Allen:

Yes sir.

Capt. Finnie:

You didn't fly due West?

Lt. Allen:

After I hit the island the second time, I tried to distinguish the other build or fade and I was getting too much interference. About then, I tried to fly back to the mainland of Florida after turning on Morrison Field and Miami radios.

Capt. Finnie:

How long after you took up the reciprocal heading of 125° did you hold it?



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Lt. Allen: It was another 20 minutes.

Capt. Rennie: Then you flew due west for how long?

Lt. Allen: For approximately one and one-half hours.

Capt. Bibble: What was the indicated air speed?

Lt. Anderson: Indicated air speed 208 mi. pr. hr.  
I later cut back to 185 mi. pr. hr.

Maj. Anderson: Did you decrease your RPM and manifold pressure?

Lt. Allen: Yes sir.

Capt. Coy: Lieutenant, when you accepted this airplane was the DF equipment functioning?

Lt. Allen: No sir.

Maj. Anderson: When did you find out that your radio equipment was not working properly?

Lt. Allen: Immediately, when I called the tower at Wilmington, but I never thought anything about it because most of the Bendix radio equipment and all other equipment in that airplane are seldom working properly.

Capt. Coy: Did you check your directional finding equipment?

Lt. Allen: I checked it but found it inoperative. It was the old type Bendix with a left-right indicator on it.

Maj. Anderson: But you felt confident that you could find Nassau without the aid of that equipment?

Lt. Allen: Yes sir, having made the trip several times before.

Capt. Coy: You say you landed at Raleigh and Jacksonville and didn't report that radio equipment was inoperative?

Lt. Allen: No sir. I didn't pay much attention to it because I have found that they are more trouble than they are worth. I'd rather fly using a compass heading and pilotage by land marks rather than by radio.

Capt. Coy: Did you check the magnetic compass against the published range headings when you were flying down from Wilmington?

Lt. Allen: No sir. I wasn't flying the range headings all the way down. I couldn't say how close they came. I have flown that range before. Visibility was unusually good that day so I didn't bother with the range but was flying strictly by pilotage....could spot towns and villages that were familiar.

Capt. Coy: So you actually didn't check the compass to see how accurate it was?

Lt. Allen: It has an aperiodic compass located in the pilot's cockpit between the pilot's legs. There was a regular magnetic compass with a fixed lubber line in the bombardiers compartment which I could sight by looking through a blank space in the instrument panel. At one time I noticed that the difference between the aperiodic compass and the magnetic compass was approximately 40°, but I didn't pay any attention to it for I had used aperiodic compasses before and they are usually more accurate than the other type.

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Capt. Finnie: Which compass were you depending on?

Lt. Allen: The aperiodic compass located between the pilot's knees.

Capt. Finnie: Have you made any estimate as to what your error was?

Lt. Allen: No sir, I haven't been able to find out what that island was I hit. I made several trips to Nassau before and never saw an island that looked as inhabited as that one. I knew that wasn't Andros island. There were sail boats all around it.

Capt. Finnie: Which map were you using?

Lt. Allen: I was using a strip map that I had made from a regular chart from Morrison Field to Nassau.

Col. Anderson: Is it this?

Lt. Allen: No, that's a map taken from a pilot's information manual. The one I used was a map I drew from Operations at Jacksonville when I made my first trip down there last May.

Col. Anderson: Was the radio range been changed since last May?

Capt. Bender: There wasn't any range until August.

Capt. Finnie: No, it wasn't there.

(dir)

Capt. Finnie: This was a fairly large size island? Was it Cat Island, do you think?

Lt. Allen: I had an estimated time of arrival for Nassau of about 1 hr. and 10 mins. There was a bunch of cumulus clouds up there that day and they had a lot of cloud reflections on the water. I flew my heading for another 15 mins. after my EIA ran out.

Capt. Cox: You flew another 20 minutes East?

Lt. Allen: Yes, I flew another 20 mins. and not finding anything I flew -----

Capt. Cox: When you started to fly due East after 1 hr. and 20 mins. what did you hit?

Lt. Allen: I hit the island after that. I figured I wasn't sure in my own mind and I might have been mistaken on it being Andros. I figured I could sight it from there. I didn't sight anything that resembled it. When I didn't sight another island, then I turned back to the Florida coast. Then I passed over another island and it was very flat so I recognized it as being Andros Island.

Capt. Finnie: Did you cross any big islands on your 270° heading?

Lt. Allen: No sir.

Capt. Bender: Were you on an overcast at any time?

Lt. Allen: No, I was underneath.

Capt. Finnie: Did you see Bimini or Cat Cay on the way down.

Lt. Allen: I didn't recognize Bimini on the way down at all.

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Capt. Finnie: Did you turn South at all?

Lt. Allen: No I went on a  $270^{\circ}$  heading all the way.

Capt. Finnie: Until you sighted a tanker?

Lt. Allen: Before I sighted a tanker I worked a fade on Ft. Myers on the southwest area off the Florida coast. I flew a bi-sector heading trying to intercept Ft. Myers radio range.

Capt. Finnie: What was that heading approximately?

Lt. Allen: I don't remember exactly, was too excited about the whole thing....around  $310^{\circ}$  I think.

Capt. Coy: Lt. what position did the boat give you when they picked you up?

Lt. Allen: I have that someplace here. It was between Rebecca Shoals and Dry Tortugas, latitude  $24^{\circ} 33'$  North and longitude  $82^{\circ} 42'$  West.

Maj. Anderson: Getting back to your clearance, you say you received no briefing at all.

Lt. Allen: I have been briefed on the route before.

Maj. Anderson: That's all well and good, do you think that's the reason why you weren't briefed...because you have been on the route before?

Lt. Allen: I assume so Sir.

Maj. Anderson: You weren't briefed in the ditching procedure?

Lt. Allen: We attended ground school, lectures on them all the time. I've got 3 water crossings and one other foreign trip.

Maj. Anderson: Where did you get your last weather report?

Lt. Allen: In Jacksonville air, but we did call Morrison tower for weather at Nassau and he said Nassau weather was contact.

Maj. Anderson: Did you have the Windsor-log....West Palm Beach to Nassau?

Lt. Allen: No Sir, I didn't have the Windsor log. I had a Windsor log from Jacksonville to West Palm Beach. Jacksonville's clearance was by CMA to West Palm Beach. I received a radio clearance from Morrison Field to Nassau.

Maj. Anderson: Where were you authorized to clear to Nassau by radio? Was it your own station or where?

Lt. Allen: Sir, that's the procedure for the past year.

Maj. Anderson: You mean it was the procedure, no more.

Capt. Coy: Lieutenant, do you think that your compass could have been  $40^{\circ}$  off?

Lt. Allen: It could be Sir. I am not passing that off as an excuse at all. I am just stating that at one period that the difference in the compass between the Bombardier's and Pilot's compartment, there was a variance at one time of approximately  $40^{\circ}$ .

Capt. Donahue: Did you have your range on to Miami at that time?

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Lt. Allen: That's right.

Maj. Anderson: Lt. Allen, there are a couple other questions. When was the last time you made an overseas trip between the United States and Nassau.

Lt. Allen: Last June 1943.

Maj. Anderson: What type equipment have you been flying?

Lt. Allen: I have been flying B-25's, C-47's....I have been picking up planes in Sub-Depots around the country and delivering them to the different bases. I made a trip to India as a co-pilot. Since then I have been acting as an instructor in transition school for the past 3 months in Wilmington. In between times I picked up short trips in an A-20 and last month made a trip to Casablanca in an A-20.

Maj. Anderson: What route did you fly?

Lt. Allen: From this route here.

Maj. Anderson: You made the trip more than a month ago. Approximately how many flying hours did you have?

Lt. Allen: Approximately 1,100 hours. Approximately 1,000 of those hours is in multi-engine equipment.

Maj. Anderson: Any further questions....thank you very much Lt. Allen, I don't think it is necessary to question the corporal here. You have covered it very well, and I appreciate it.

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AAF WEATHER STATION  
DET. NINTH WEATHER SQUADRON  
MORRISON FIELD

West Palm Beach, Fla.  
8 March 1944

MORRISON • NASSAU • KEY WEST

WEATHER ON FLIGHT  
2 March 1944  
(1200Z - 1800Z)

Scattered Cumulus to Nassau with bases at 2000 feet, tops 4000 feet.


Scattered to broken Cumulus Nassau to Key West with bases 2000 feet,  
tops 6000 feet.

\*\*\*\*\*

Contact over tops at 5 00 feet to Nassau.  
Contact over tops at 7000 feet to Key West.  
Contact at 1000 feet over entire route.

\*\*\*\*\*

Winds Aloft:	1000 ft.	5000 ft.	7000 ft.	9000 ft.
Morrison to Nassau -	060/12k	050/11k	040/5k	300/12k
Nassau to Key West -	080/10k	090/8k	040/5k	300/12k

  
LEONARD H. HUTCHINSON,  
Captain, Air Corps.

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WAN/emp

HEADQUARTERS STATION NO. 11  
CARIBBEAN WING, A. T. C.  
MORRISON FIELD

WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

8 March 1944

SUBJECT: Aircraft Accident Report, A.A.F. Form #14.

TO: Headquarters, Office of Flying Safety, Army Air Forces,  
Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

1. Transmitted herewith A.A.F. Form #14 pertaining to accident of A-30A, #43-8890.

2. The findings of the Aircraft Accident Committee are approved.

*Richard T. Light*  
RICHARD T. LIGHT  
Lieut. Colonel, A. C.  
Commanding

Incl. 3

A.A.F. Form #14.  
(A-30A, #43-8890).  
Weather Report  
Statement of Pilot

Cy/Hq/OFS/W-S N.C.  
Cy/CG/ATC  
Cy/CG/AAF  
Cy/CO/MCAAB/Wilm., Del.  
Cy/CG/STA #1, CW

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