

Accident No.

45-9-2-502

Date

Checked by

SM

10-2-42

Analyzed by

JWW

Copied for Wright
Field by

Doubt Copy

Notes

1225:9-43

WAR DEPARTMENT
U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

ACCIDENT No. 7539-2-502

REPORT OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

(1) Place 1407th AAF Base Unit (2) Date September 2, 1944 (3) Time 2032
 AIRCRAFT: (4) Type and model C-53 (5) A. F. No. 43-2034 (6) Station 1403rd AAF Base Unit
 Organization: (7) ATC (8) European Division 1403rd AAF Base Unit
 (Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron)

PERSONNEL

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	Robert B. Fix	P	0-503318	1st Lt.	18 01	AC	EDATC	None	None
CP	Loyd C. Lovejoy	P	0-2660047	2nd Lt.	18 01	AC	EDATC	None	None
X	Dwite M. McCloud	P	0-2060051	2nd Lt.	28 01	AC	EDATC	None	None
E	Robert L. Smith	E	16109386	Cpl.	28 20	AC	EDATC	None	None
X	Clyde (NMI) Bane	X	33301331	S/Sgt.	28 20	AC	EDATC	None	None
X	Donald K. Lefler	X	15339725	Cpl.	28 20	AC	EDATC	None	None

PILOT CHARGED WITH ACCIDENT

(20) Fix Robert B (21) 0-503318 (22) 1st Lt (23) 18 (24) AC
 (Last name) (First name) (Middle initial) (Serial number) (Rank) (Personnel class) (Branch)
 Assigned (25) ATC (26) ED (27) 1403rd AAF Base Unit (28) 1403rd AAF Base Unit
 (Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)
 Attached for flying (29) ATC (30) ED (31) 1407th AAF Base Unit (32) 1403rd AAF BU
 (Command and Air Force) (Group) (Squadron) (Station)
 Original rating (33) Pilot (34) 8-5-42 Present rating (35) P (36) 11-8-42 Instrument rating (37) K
 (Rating) (Date) (Rating) (Date) (Date)

FIRST PILOT HOURS:

(at the time of this accident)

(38) This type 115:55 (42) Instrument time last 6 months _____
 (39) This model 3:05 (43) Instrument time last 30 days _____
 (40) Last 90 days 61:50 (44) Night time last 6 months _____
 (41) Total 864:45 (45) Night time last 30 days _____

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE NF 9/3/44 J.W.W.

DAMAGE		(49) LIST OF DAMAGED PARTS
(46) Aircraft	<u>0 4</u>	Right Wing M CLASSIFIED
(47) Engine(s)	<u>Right</u>	Right L.G. M
(48) Propeller(s)	<u>Right</u>	

(50) Weather at the time of accident CAVU EH
 BY AUTHORITY OF CG, AAF
 BY FCA DATE 2-13-46

(51) Was the pilot flying on instruments at the time of accident No
 (52) Cleared from 1407th AAF Base Unit To Local (54) Kind of clearance CFR

(53) Pilot's mission Local Transition Flight

(56) Nature of accident Fire in flight, ground loop

(57) Cause of accident Right engine caught fire in flight, engine would not feather, and fell from aircraft in flight, right gear weakened by fire folded during landing roll causing aircraft to ground loop.

(58) Has Form 54 been attached? Ans. No.

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DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

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

On the evening of Sept. 2nd 1944 at 18:00Z 1st Lt. Robert B. Fix was acting as an Instructor on a local Transition flight in C-53 43-2034. A normal take-off was made at 2016Z, (Dark). The aircraft climbed to 1000 feet and turned onto the cross-wind leg, proceeded about 2 miles and turned onto the downwind leg. When the aircraft was opposite the field on the down wind leg the engineer noticed a stream of flame about 6 inches wide coming out of the top of the right engine nacelle. The pilot was notified and the fire extinguisher was immediately pulled, the flames died momentarily but rose again with greater intensity. The pilot shut off the right engine and prepared for single engine operation, several attempts were made to feather the propeller but were unsuccessful. The pilot turned onto his base leg and tried to contact the tower. The tower could hear the call but was unable to get an answer, a green light was flashed to the aircraft. When the aircraft turned onto the final approach the entire engine nacelle was enveloped in flame and the engine was vibrating violently. Shortly before the pilot called for wheels down, the right engine mounts tore from the wing and the engine fell from the aircraft. As it fell one of the propeller blades hit the forward section of the fuselage. The aircraft continued in on the approach and made contact with ground. It hit solidly on both wheels, this indicated that both gears were down and locked. After rolling down the runway for 200 ft. the aircraft turned slowly off the runway to the left at an angle of about 30°, after running about 200 ft. on the grassed area the right gear, weakened by intense heat, collapsed. The right wing dropped to the ground causing a partial ground loop to the right. The aircraft came to rest 90° from its original landing path. The crew members uninjured, abandoned the aircraft.

Findings of the Board: Examination of the engine indicates that the fire was centered around the accessory section. It is the opinion of the board that the fire was started by a small gas leak that got progressively worse as engine vibration increased. Because all lines to the engine were torn out and burned beyond recognition it cannot be adequately determined where the leak occurred or what caused it. The aircraft going off the runway to the left on landing is explained by a slight wind to the left together with 4½ degrees of left rudder trim. The rudder was the only means of directional control the pilot had as the right brake had burned out and the electrical switches were cut immediately after landing. The right tire did not blow out on the initial contact with the ground, but blew out later during the landing roll. As the right landing gear strut had been weakened considerably by heat, the added stress produced by the flat tire caused the right gear to collapse and the aircraft to ground loop.

The board agrees that the pilot is in no way responsible for the accident and that under the circumstances used sound judgment and good technique in bringing the aircraft back to the field.

Due to the circumstances surrounding this accident the cause of the fire and the responsibility cannot be definitely determined, for this reason recommendations cannot justifiably be advanced.



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Signature

Quintus Feland
QUINTUS (NMI) FELAND
Capt. Air Corps

James D. Rockett
JAMES D. ROCKETT, Capt. AC Member
James D. Bradley
1st Lt. AC Member

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PILOTS STATEMENT

This accident happened the night of August 2nd in a C-53 type aircraft AC # 43-2034 while in the process of a training flight. The crew consisted of a pilot, co-pilot, engineer and three passengers, none was injured.

The last take-off was made at approximately 22:15 with all instruments registering normal operation. The cowl flaps were left in trail position as traffic pattern altitude was gained and the turn on the downwind leg was completed, they were intended to remain in that position until cyl. head temp. registered normal. It was almost immediately after the turn on the downwind leg that the engineer noticed the right engine was on fire. The co-pilot was immediately directed to close the cowl-flaps on the burning engine and as pilot I turned the fire extinguisher to the right engine and pulled the handle. This had a momentary effect, it reduced the flames to some extent but never entirely extinguished them. As this was discovered to have little effect upon the burning engine the pilot and co-pilot prepared for single-engine operation. The controls of the left engine were immediately advanced for single-engine performance. The prop control, throttle, mixture control, magneto switch and fuel cock were all closed on the burning engine and the feathering button was held in for that engine. The engine would not feather and five or six attempts up until the time the engine fell off failed to feather it. Because of these attempts the base leg was out farther than usual and during all this time controls and instruments were checked and re-checked for a single-engine and landing. The turn onto the base leg was made at an altitude of approximately eight hundred feet and one hundred twenty m.p.h. Radio contact with the tower could not be effected but they saw us and gave us the green light on the base leg. It was on the down-wind leg that one of the enlisted men jettisoned the rear door. From the time the first attempt was made to feather the engine, the airplane vibrated violently and became more violent up until the time the engine tore loose from its mount. With the hydraulic selector valve on the left engine, cowl flaps opened, and all controls and switches on the burning engine in the "closed" or "off" position the turn on the approach leg was completed. Additional attempts to feather the right engine still failed. It was estimated that on the base leg we were four or five miles from the field. Approximately three miles from the field, lined up with runway 32, there were a series of three or four explosions and it was then the co-pilot states that the burning engine fell from its mounts. As it fell the prop cut a hole in the fuselage. As pilot I was unaware that the engine fell from the mount although the co-pilot states he mentioned it two or three times. It was then I called for gear "down" and although the hydraulic selector valve was on the operating engine the co-pilot states that the gage registered only 250 lbs. pressure. After the engine fell off the heat and smoke became more intense and the cabin windows had to be opened. The later part of the final approach was made at an air-speed of 105 m.p.h. and a normal two-point landing was made on the runway. Despite all efforts the plane could not be kept on the runway and went off to the left. The main line and magneto switches were turned off as soon as the wheels touched the ground. As soon as the plane stopped the airplane was completely abandoned at a safe distance. The landing light and cockpit lights kept burning although the battery and master switch were both turned "off". With everyone at a safe distance from the airplane the ambulance and fire truck arrived approximately two or three minutes later.

Robert B. Fix

ROBERT B. FIX
1st Lt, Air Corps.

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STATEMENT OF ACCIDENT

We were shooting landings after doing air work for about an hour. We had just taken off and had gotten to 1000 ft. and turned on our down wind leg when the engineer came up and said the rt. engine was on fire. The pilot immediately called for flaps and gear up so I put the gear up and he pulled the fire extinguisher and I closed the cowl flaps. The fire died out to a small flame then started getting larger again. So the pilot went to the good engine. He tried to feather the props on the bad engine but it wouldn't feather. By this time the fire was all over the engine. We turned on our base leg and I called the tower and told him we were coming in on one engine and that our right engine was on fire. He gave us the green light but didn't answer on the radio. By this time we were coming in on the approach leg.

The plane was vibrating violently and the rt. engine was just a mass of flame. Suddenly there was what sounded like an explosion. I looked around and the engine was gone. I told the pilot but he was concentrating on the landing and didn't answer, evidently not hearing me.

There were several other explosions but nothing happened that I could see.

We were almost to the runway and the pilot called for gear down, so I put them down but the pressure moved only up to 250 lbs. I waited until we were almost on the ground for it to build up. It didn't so I locked the gear and we landed almost immediately.

We hit on the runway veered slowly to the left and then made a partial ground loop to the right. As we did the rt. wing dropped down and the plane stopped. We cut off all switches and got out as quickly as we could and ran out to a distance where we would be safe if the gas tanks exploded.

The fire truck and ambulance came in a minute or two and put the fire out.

Lt. Fix, Lt. McCloud, a Sgt. and myself went out to see that the engine hadn't fallen on the railroad track. It hadn't so we came back and reported same and went back to our area.

Lloyd C. Lovejoy
LOYD C. LOVEJOY
2nd Lt, Air Corps,
Co-Pilot

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S T A T E M E N T

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Concerning the crash of C-53 No. 43-2034 on September 2, 1944:

The first take-off was at approximately 8.30 PM. The run-up of the engines checked very good prior to each and every take-off. We were on our fifth take-off when fire in the right engine occurred. The pilot was warned of the fire and the cowl flaps were closed and the fire extinguisher was pulled which helped very little. The pilot then cut the engine off and tried to feather the prop, but the prop would not feather at that time. There was nothing Cpl Smith or I could do so we went to the tail of the ship. The plane was vibrating badly until the engine fell off. After asking permission, Cpl Smith and I released the door as smoke and fumes were filling the ship. We stayed in the back until we landed in order to stay out of the way of the men that had to be in the cockpit. After we landed and the ship stopped skidding Cpl Smith and I jumped out and ran. That is about all I remember. The crash occurred at 10.45 PM.

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Cpl. Donald K. Leffler
DONALD K. LEFFLER, 45339725
Cpl., Air Corps

STATEMENT OF ACCIDENT

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

We were shooting landings and after the third one we took off and were proceeding around the pattern normally. The fire broke out at 1000 ft. approximately straight across from the center of the runway. I was sitting in the cabin on the front left seat at the time. I happened to glance at the engine just as it caught fire. The engineer ran up to tell the pilot and I got the fire extinguisher to put out any possible cabin fire. The engine leaked normal before the fire then it just burst out burning, the flames streaming out of the cowl flaps. The crew turned on the engine extinguisher and the fire was depressed slightly, but it was still obviously burning. Later it flared up more and the fire was eating up the cowl flaps and nacelle. By this time we were on the approach and it was burning furiously. The engine was vibrating a lot; then there was a roar and the engine fell off, by this time the cabin was full of smoke and it was too hot to be there. I was by the radio operators table. Two enlisted men were in the rear and the rest of us were in the front compartments.

After the engine fell out it started to burn worse than ever. Another loud noise was heard. Later we figured it to be the tire blowing out. Then the pilot yelled "Prepare for crash landing". I passed it to the rear and we hit the ground like any normal landing. Then I ran to the rear to get ready to get out. We stopped after swinging in a circle and the three of us in the rear jumped out; shortly afterward the other three came out and we all ran clear of the accident. The fire trucks came and the fire was put out.

Dwite M. McCloud

DWITE M. McCLOUD,
2nd Lt, Air Corps,

~~RESTRICTED~~

S T A T E M E N T

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Concerning the crash of C-53 No. 43-2034 on September 2, 1944.

We made about three or four previous take-offs and landings, original take-off time was approximately 8.30 PM. Everything was normal on each take-off to my knowledge including the take off before the fire started on the right engine. We made a 90 degree turn and started back to land. We were up about 1000 feet and were putting our landing gear in the down position when Cpl Smith came up and said the right engine was off fire. As soon as that was said, the pilot pulled the fire extinguisher and I pulled up the gear. We tried to feather the engine but no results. The pilot cut the engine, mixture control in idle cut-off, throttle forward, fuel shut off on that engine. We were in line with Runway 32 when the engine fell off, hydraulic system was out evidently because we had one gear down (the left one) and the other partly down. We got approximately one quarter flap. a beautiful but rough landing.

S/Sgt. Clyde Bane

CLYDE BANE
S/SGT AIR CORPS
A.S.N. 35301331

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

S T A T E M E N T

Concerning the crash of C-53 No. 43-2034 on September 2, 1944: **RESTRICTED**

The first take off was at approximately 8.30 PM and we made four take offs after that, before each take off the plane checked out good. On the last take off the right engine caught fire in the accessory section. It was brought to the pilot's attention by myself. The co-pilot closed the cowl flaps immediately and the pilot switched the fire extinguisher to the right engine, it helped very little if at all. I received permission to kick the rear exit door open for a fast get-away. The crash landing occurred at approximately 10.45 PM, it was a very good landing under the circumstances.

Robert L. Smith

ROBERT L. SMITH
CPL., AIR CORPS
A.S.N. 16109386

STATEMENT

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

On 9-2-44 a C-53 Nbr 034 flying local was practicing landings and takeoffs. Runway in use was 32. At 2216 the pilot called the tower for takeoff. The tower cleared him for take off. A normal take off was reported by the tower. All lights were left on. At 2221 the pilot called the tower. The tower answered him. He then called again stating that he was coming in to land on one engine and was on fire turning on final approach. The tower operator called Operations, Engineering, F.C.O., Crash crew and Hospital.

The C-53 Nbr 034 was about 3 miles out on approach flying about 500' to 700' with his right engine on fire. The plane continued straight in for landing on runway 32. When 1000 to 2000 yds off the end of runway a shower of sparks was observed dropping to the ground. The plane rose up a few feet and continued to land touching runway 32 just past the end.

Swerving to the left when some 1000 yds up going off on to the grass the plane landed at 2223 fire put out at 2235.

John B. Sornberger
S/SGT. JOHN B. SORNBERGER
Control Tower Operator.

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From:-S.F.C.O. R.A.F. Valley.

To:- Director of Operations, U.S.A.A.F. Valley.

VAL/FCO/F4.

3/9/44.

Accident to C 53C - 432034.

Attached, for your information are reports submitted respectively by Flying Control Officer, Tower Controller, and Airfield Controller.

/s/ K. Stuart-Smith, S/Ldr.
(K. Stuart-Smith, S/Ldr.)
S.F.C.O. R.A.F. Station, Valley.

CERTIFIED A TRUE COPY:

Harold B. Wright
HAROLD B. WRIGHT,
1st Lt, Air Corps,
Ass't to Director of
Operations.

~~RESTRICTED~~

To:- S/Ldr. K. Stuart-Smith. S.F.C.O.
From:- F/Lt. J. Bond Duty F.C.O.

RESTRICTED

2nd September, 1944.

Sir,

Tour of Duty 1945 hours 2nd Sept. 0830 hours 3rd Sept.

1. I have the honour to submit the following report concerning an accident to a local C 47 No. 034.
At 2224 hours my Tower Controller informed me that a C-47 was coming in to land on runway 32, with an engine on fire.
2. I immediately went up to Tower Control and checked up on the action already taken, and proceeded to inform the Station Commander, the S.F.C.O. and the Orderly Officer.
3. The Aircraft landed at 2224 hours swinging to port shortly after touch down, finally coming to rest some 50 ft. off the runway. The crew were unhurt.
4. The "A" Crash tender was working on the fire within 1 minute and the "B" Crash tender was standing by within 6 minutes, the fire being finally extinguished at 2233 hours.
5. I then went out to examine the aircraft and found that the Star-board engine was missing. On return to the Control Room, the Rhosneigr Police and Valley signals-box were informed, the former making a search on the Sand-hills, the latter having the line searched between Valley and Rhosneigr railway stations. Both later reported that nothing had been found, and the police are continuing the search at daylight.
6. I later inspected the runway 32, and found no sign of damage.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
J. Bond, F/L Duty F.C.O.

CERTIFIED A TRUE COPY:

Harold B. Wright
HAROLD B. WRIGHT
1st Lt, Air Corps,
Ass't. to Director of
Operations.

RESTRICTED

To:- S/Ldr. K. Stuart-Smith, S.F.C.O. R.A.F. Station, Valley.

From:- W/O. Mitchell, E.W. 1029730. Tower Controller.

Date:- 2nd September, 1944.

Re accident to C 47 No. 034. U.S.A.A.F.

Sir,

I have to submit the following as my report on this accident which occurred during my tour of duty.

Runway in use 32. The aircraft had taken off at 2032 hours and was engaged in "circuit and bump" exercise. At 2223 hours he called on 6440 kcs and said he was coming in to land with one engine, the other was on fire. I estimate his position as being approx 2-3 miles out on final approach. Starboard engine was on fire.

Crash Crew were told to stand by for action, F.C.O. American Engineering, Operators, and R.A.F. Sick Quarters were notified.

The aircraft landed at 2225 hours and after approx 800 yds swung to port off the runway coming to rest about 50 ft off the port side, still burning. The crash crew were on the spot in a very short time and at 2233 hours the fire appeared to be out. We were informed that nobody had been hurt.

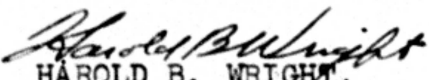
While on final approach blazing parts had been seen dropping from aircraft so at 2304 hours Valley signal box were informed and instructed to search the railway track for possible obstructions and the signal lights were switched to 'ON'.

At 2248 hours the runway had been changed to 02 and later Valley signal box informed me that no obstructions had been found so the lights were switched to 'OFF'. Red glim lamps were placed round the aircraft.

At the time of the accident the following lighting was on :- Flare path, funnels, contact-strip and both sets of obstruction lights.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
E.W. Mitchell, W/O.

CERTIFIED A TRUE COPY:


HAROLD B. WRIGHT,
1st Lt, Air Corps,
Ass't. to Director of
Operations.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
REPORT OF CRASH OF C 47 NO. 2034

Sir,

I was informed by the Tower Controller that C 47 No. 2034 was coming in to land with one engine on fire and despatched the Crash tender to the old Perimeter track crossing R/Way 32 and had them stand by there. The aircraft came straight in from S.E. and I saw that it was his starboard motor that was blazing and as he came past the caravan I could see that his undercarriage (starboard side) had been badly burned away and was buckled by the heat.

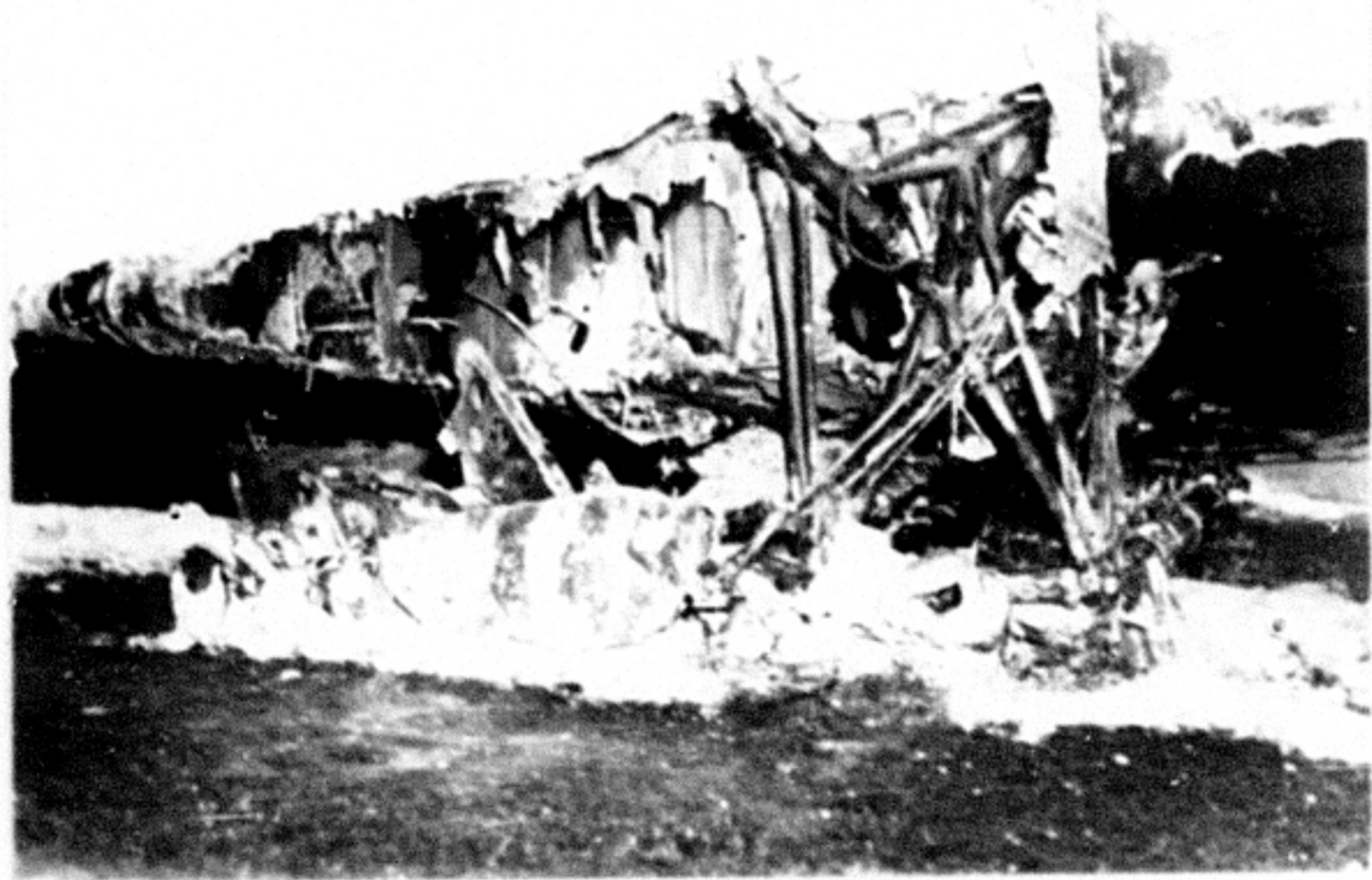
He touched down on the R/Way and it folded up under him and swung him around in a circle and he came to rest about 20 yards clear of the R/Way on the Port side grass. The Crash Crew had the fire under control after about 5 minutes and completely out after about 10 or 12 minutes.

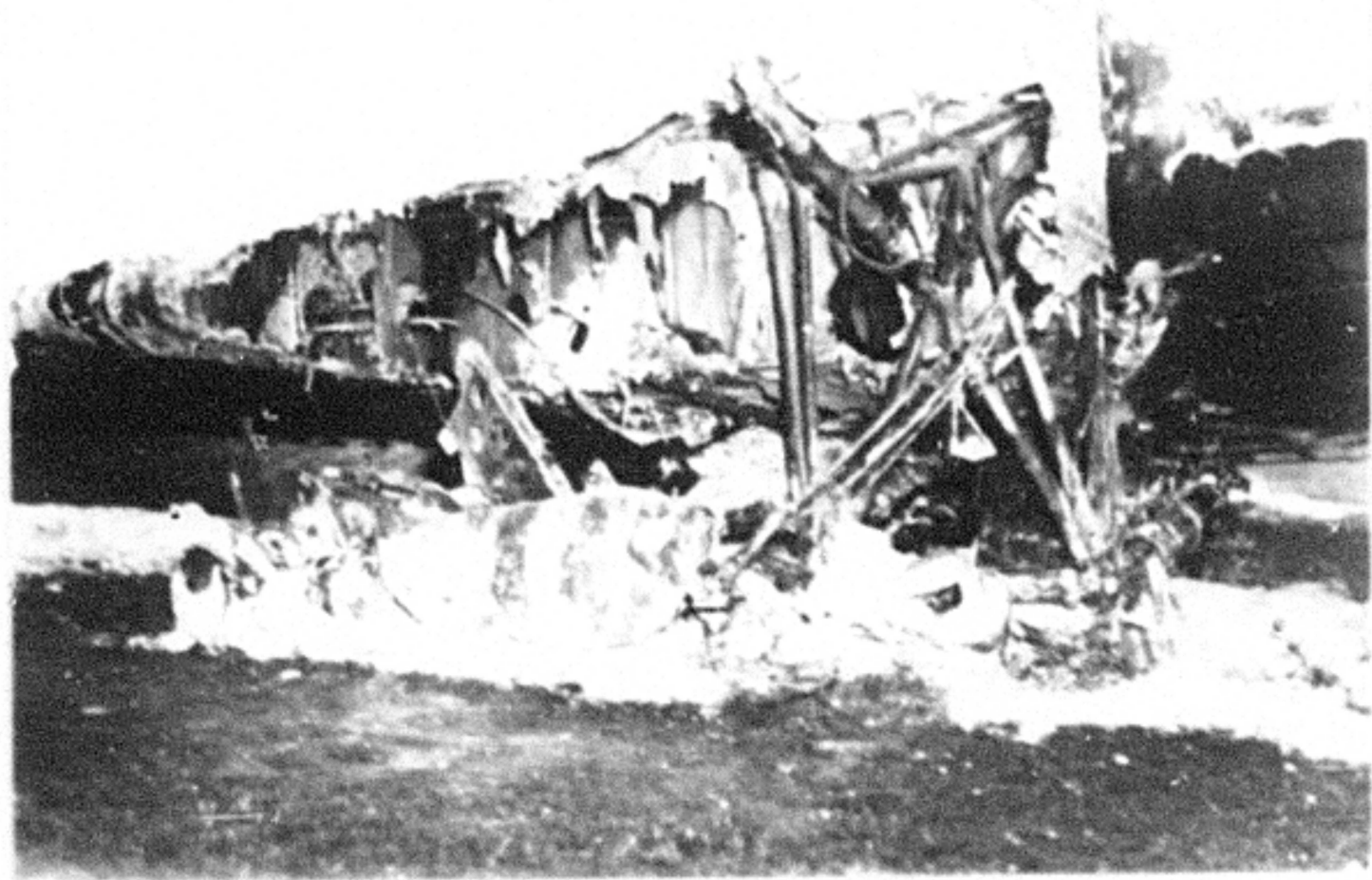
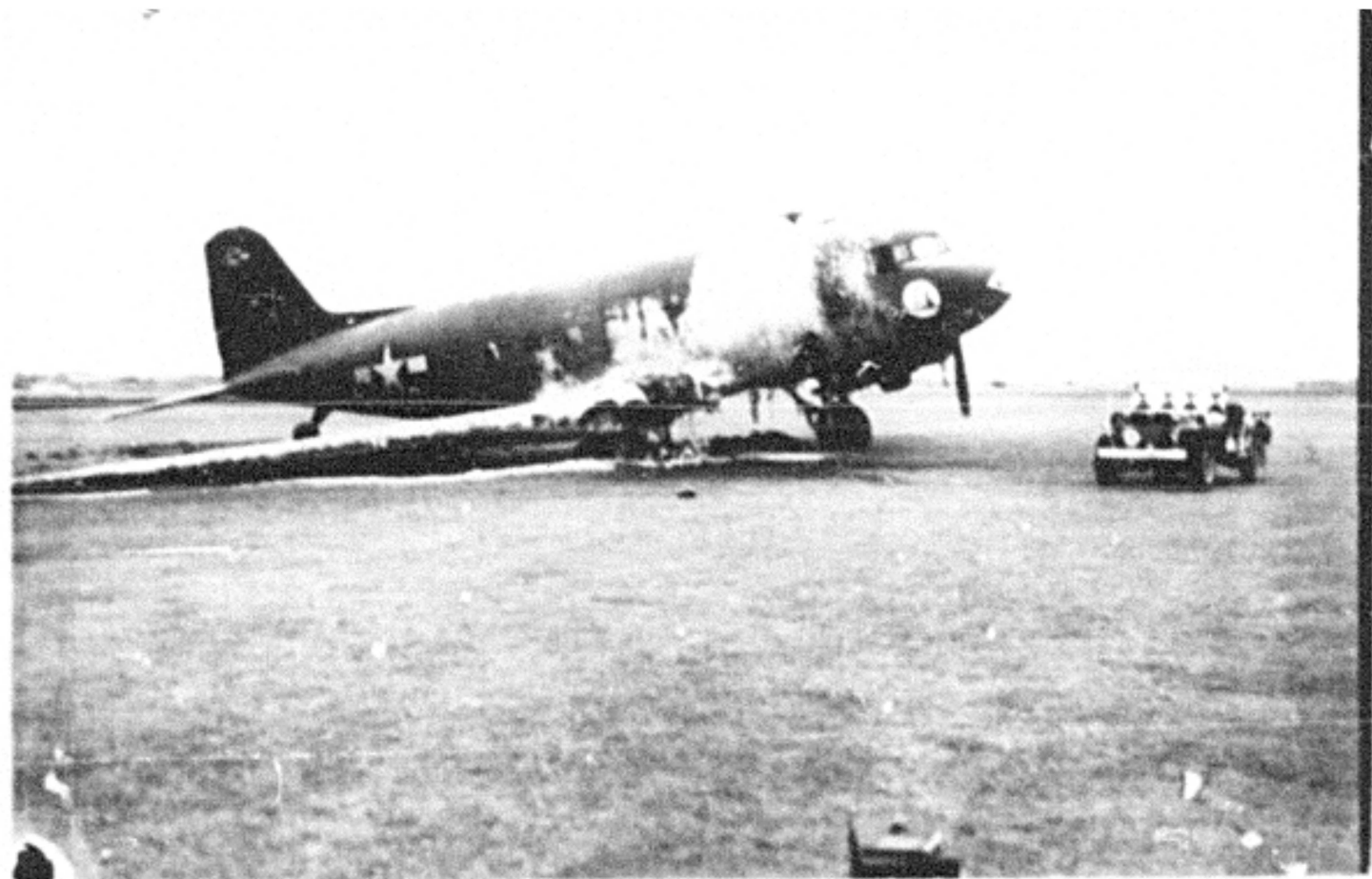
J.L. Endersby, Cpl.
duty A.F.C. 1930 - 0815.
2/9/44.

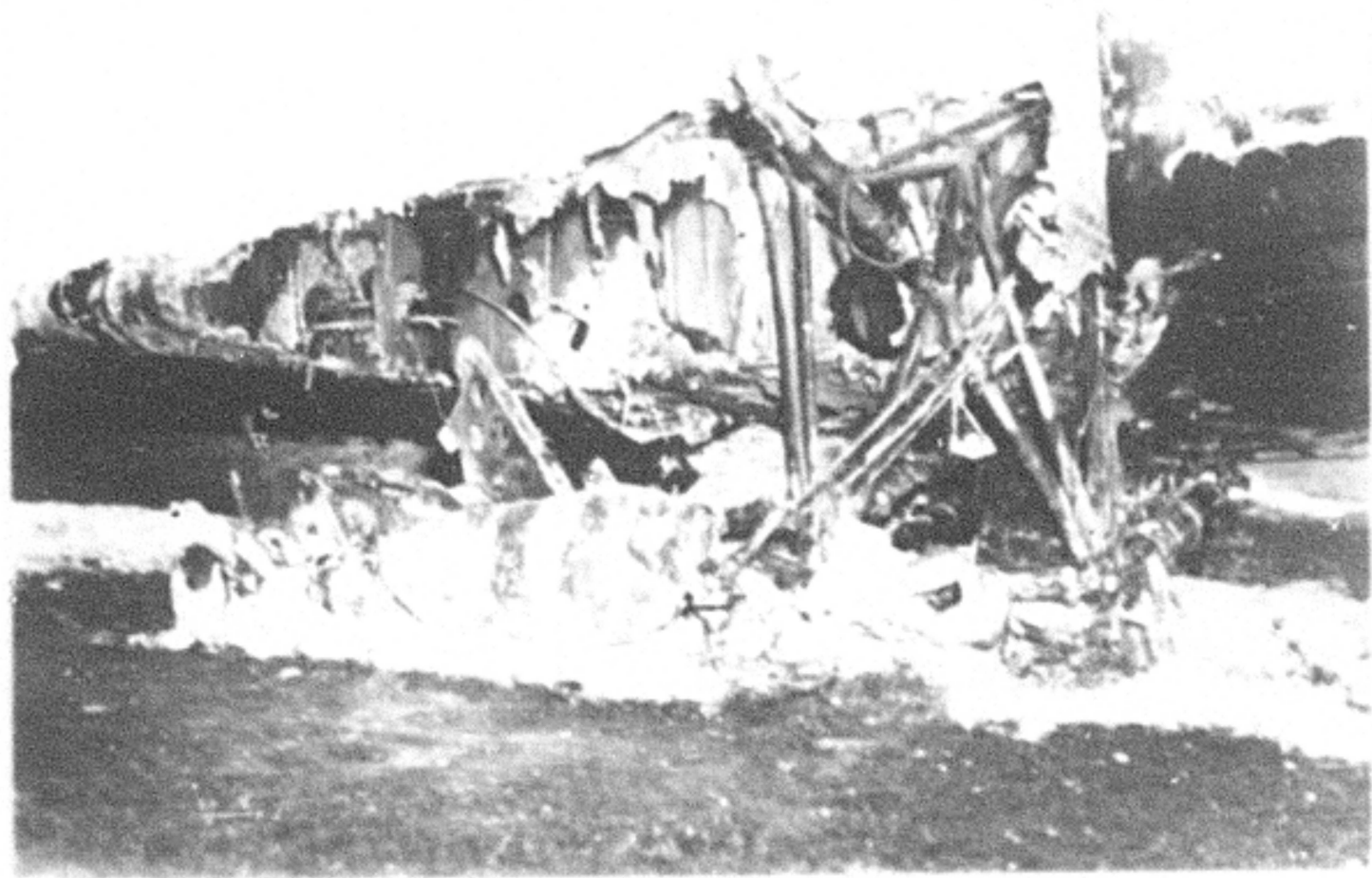
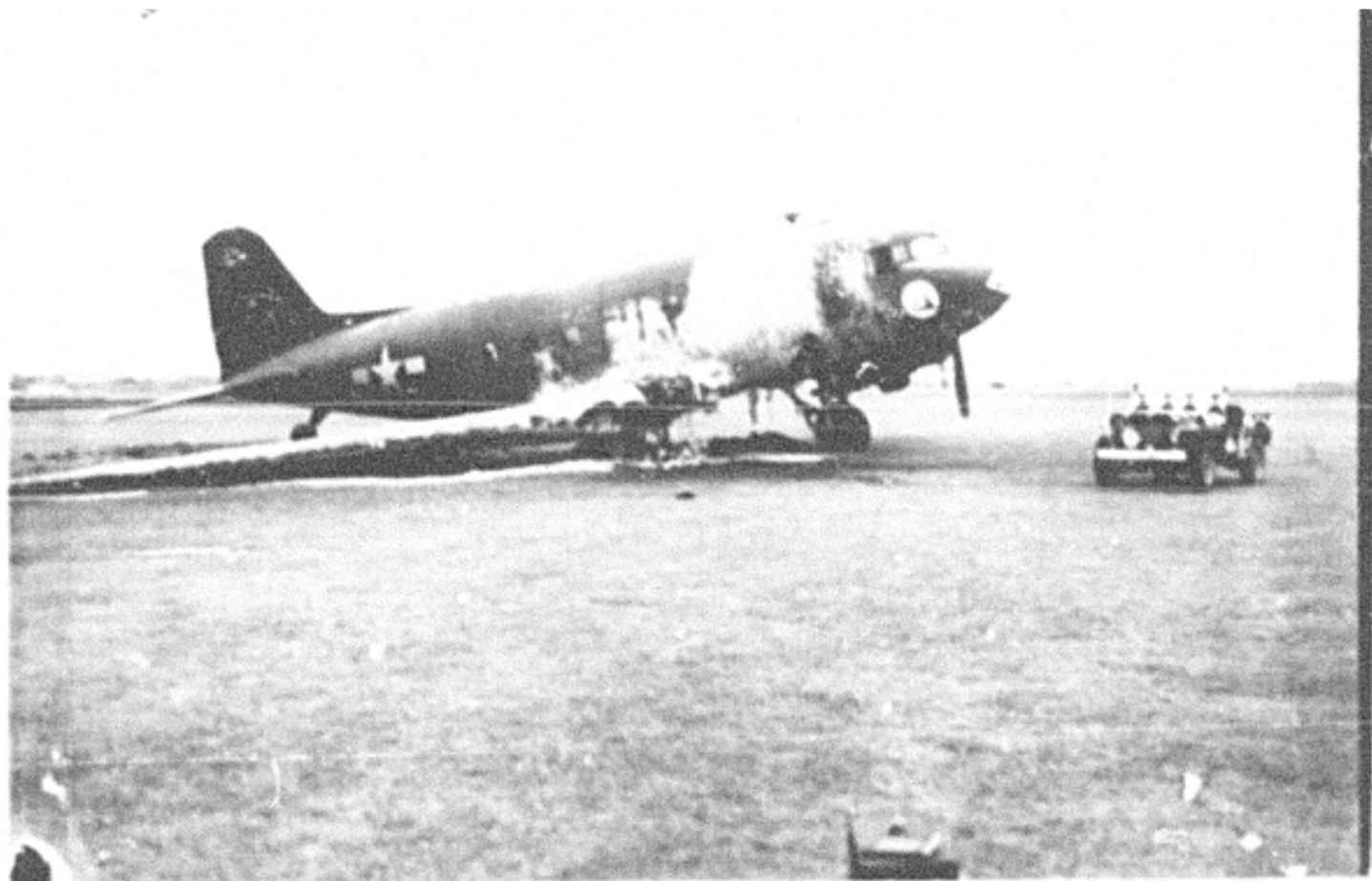
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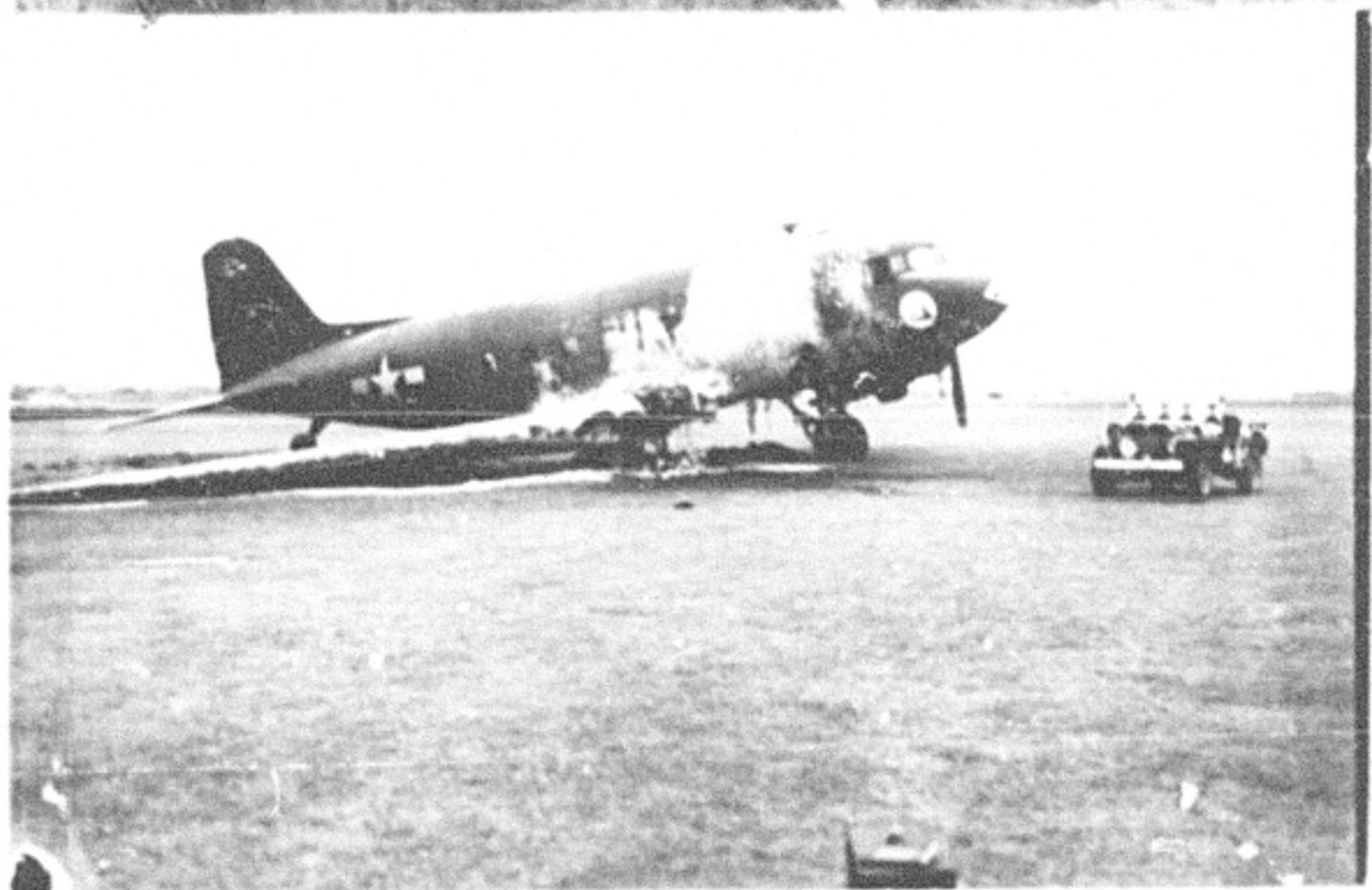
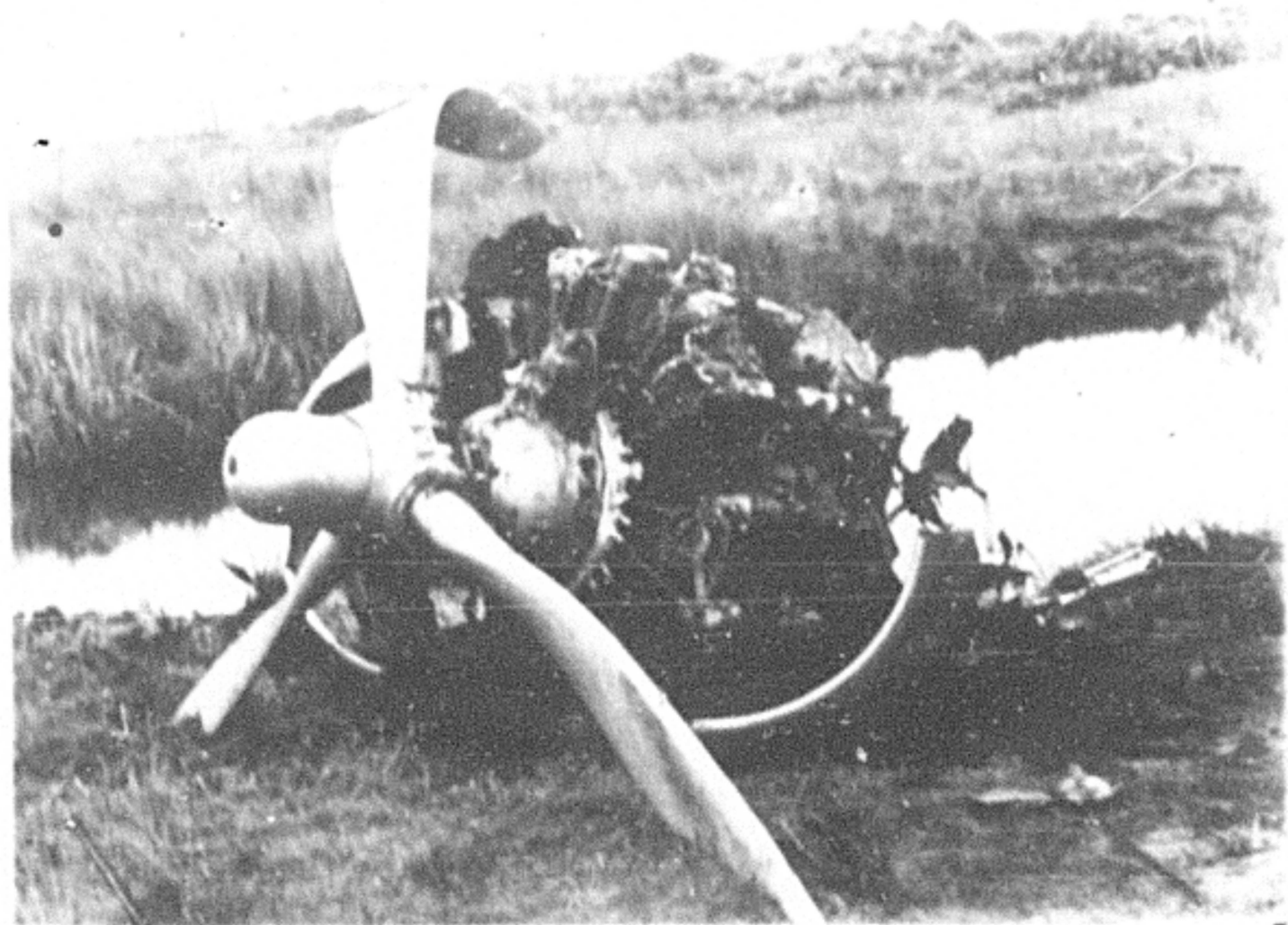
Harold B. Wright
HAROLD B. WRIGHT,
1st Lt, Air Corps,
Ass't to Director of
Operations.

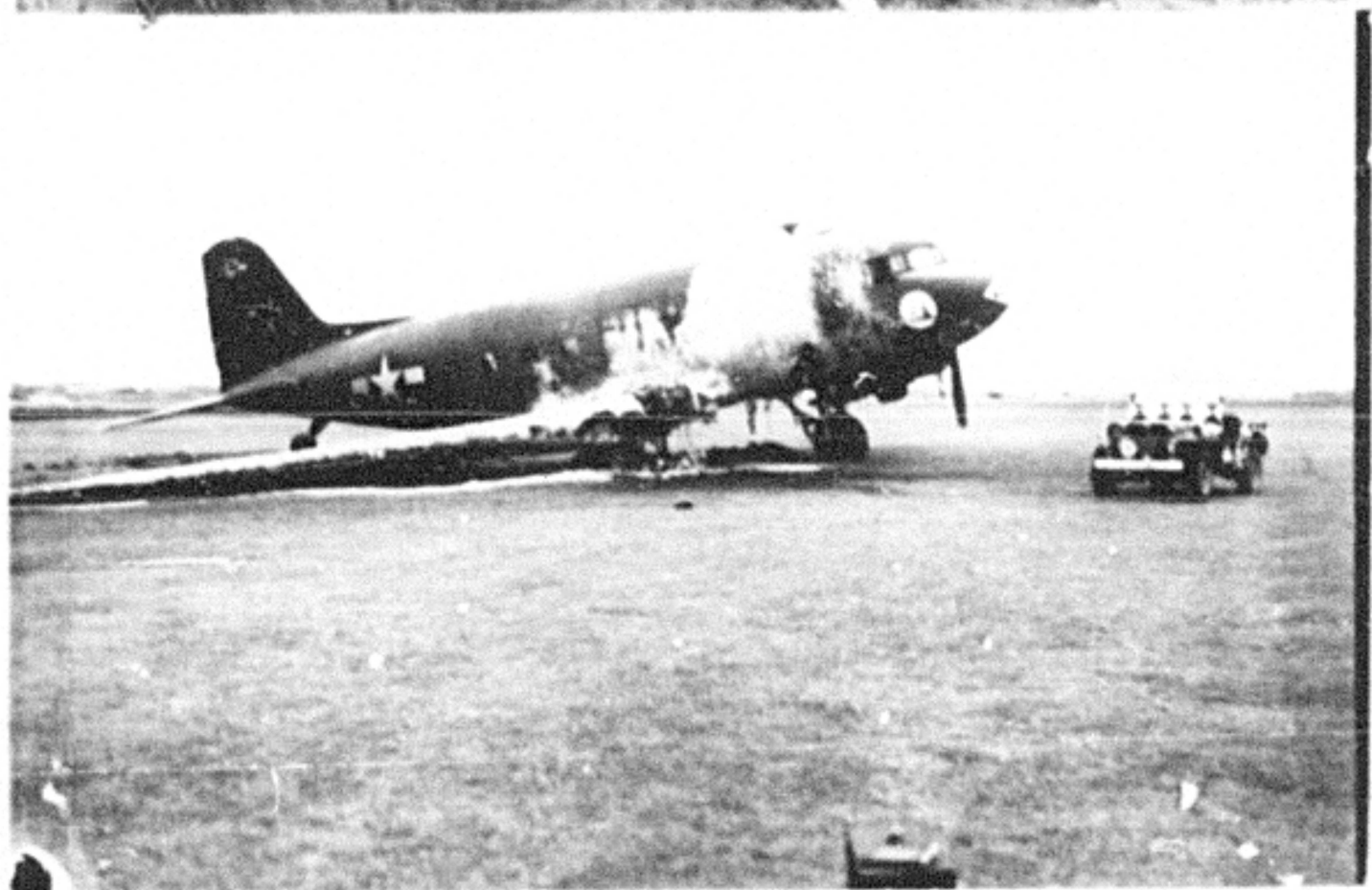
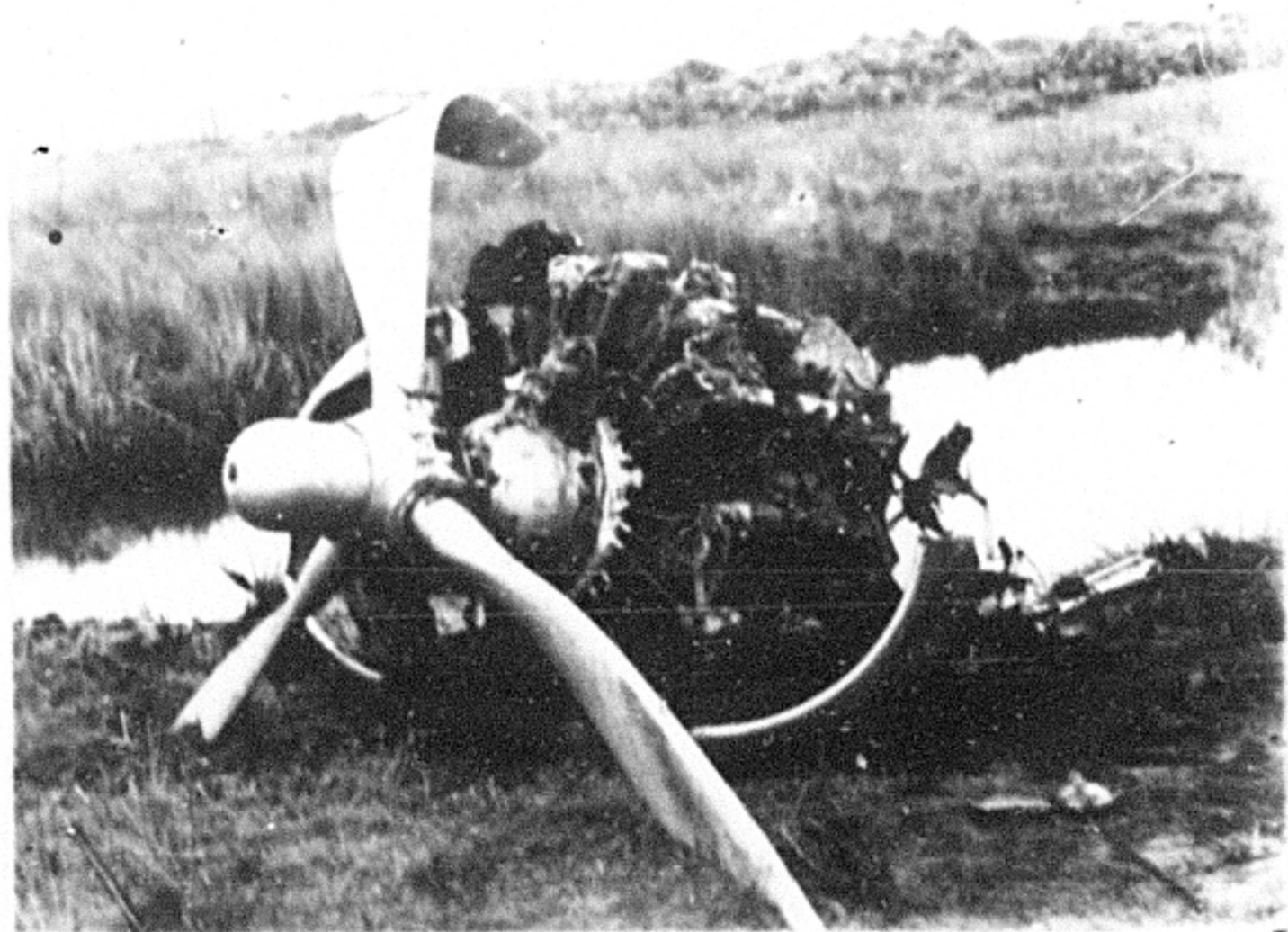
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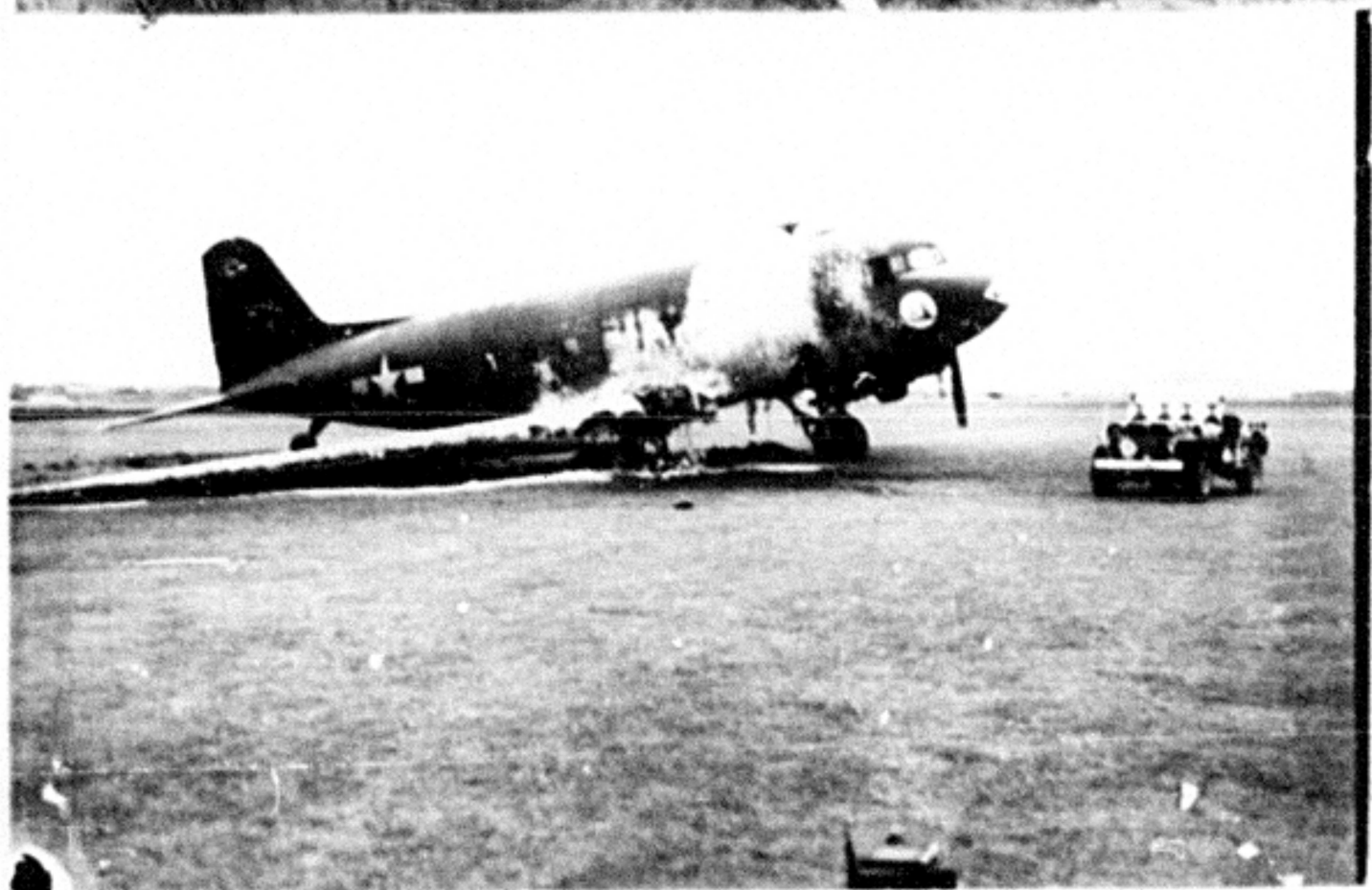
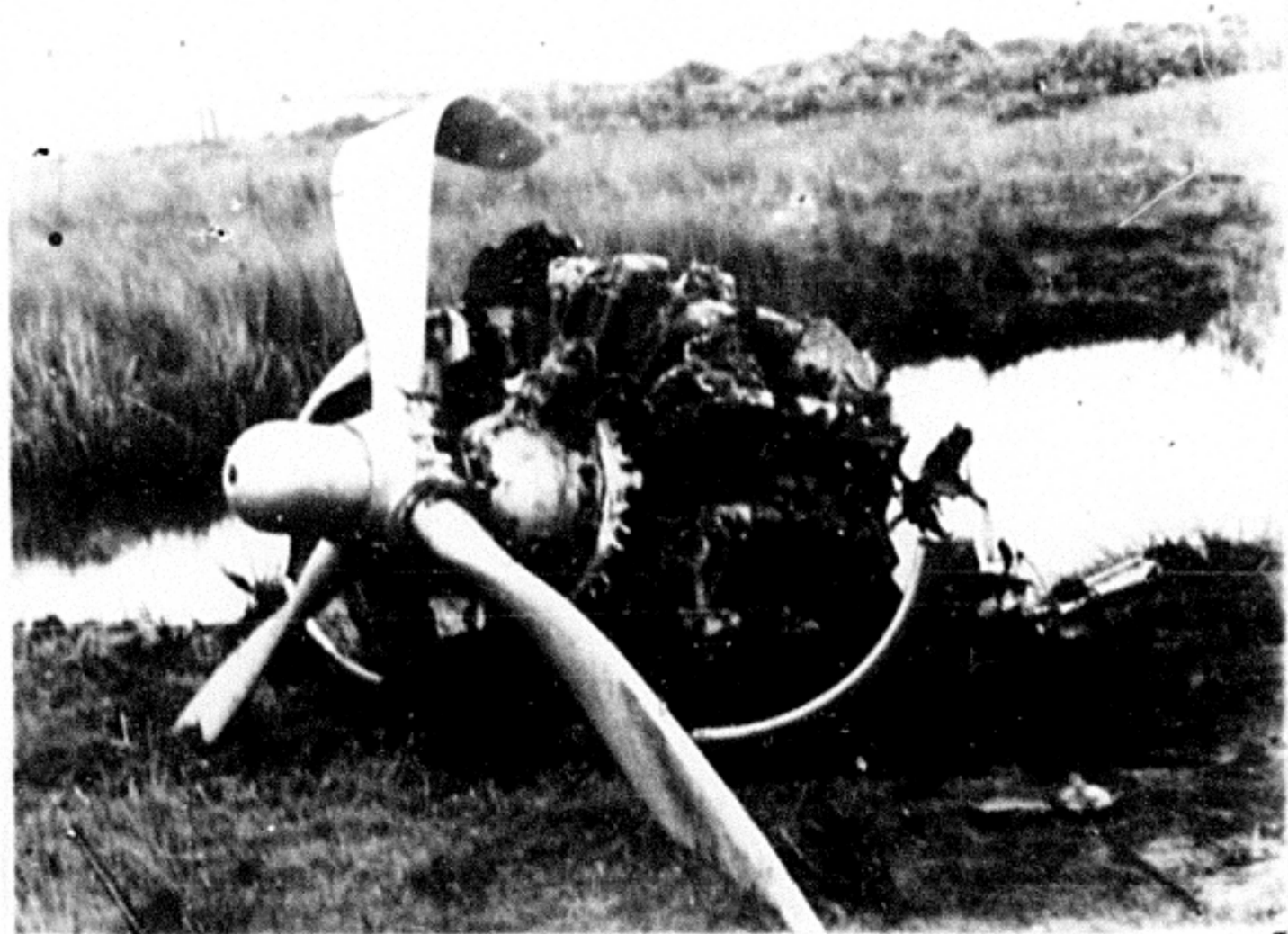


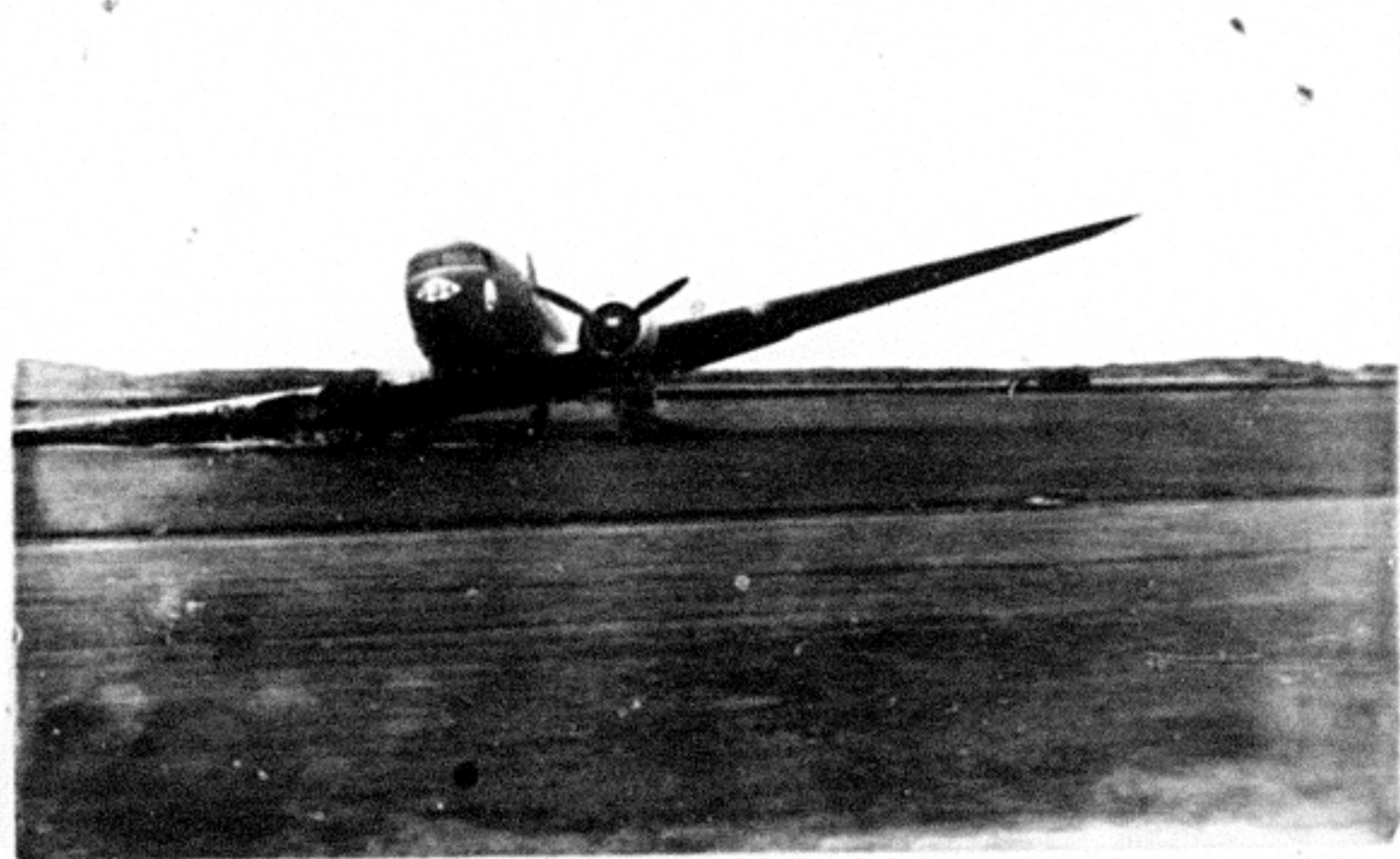
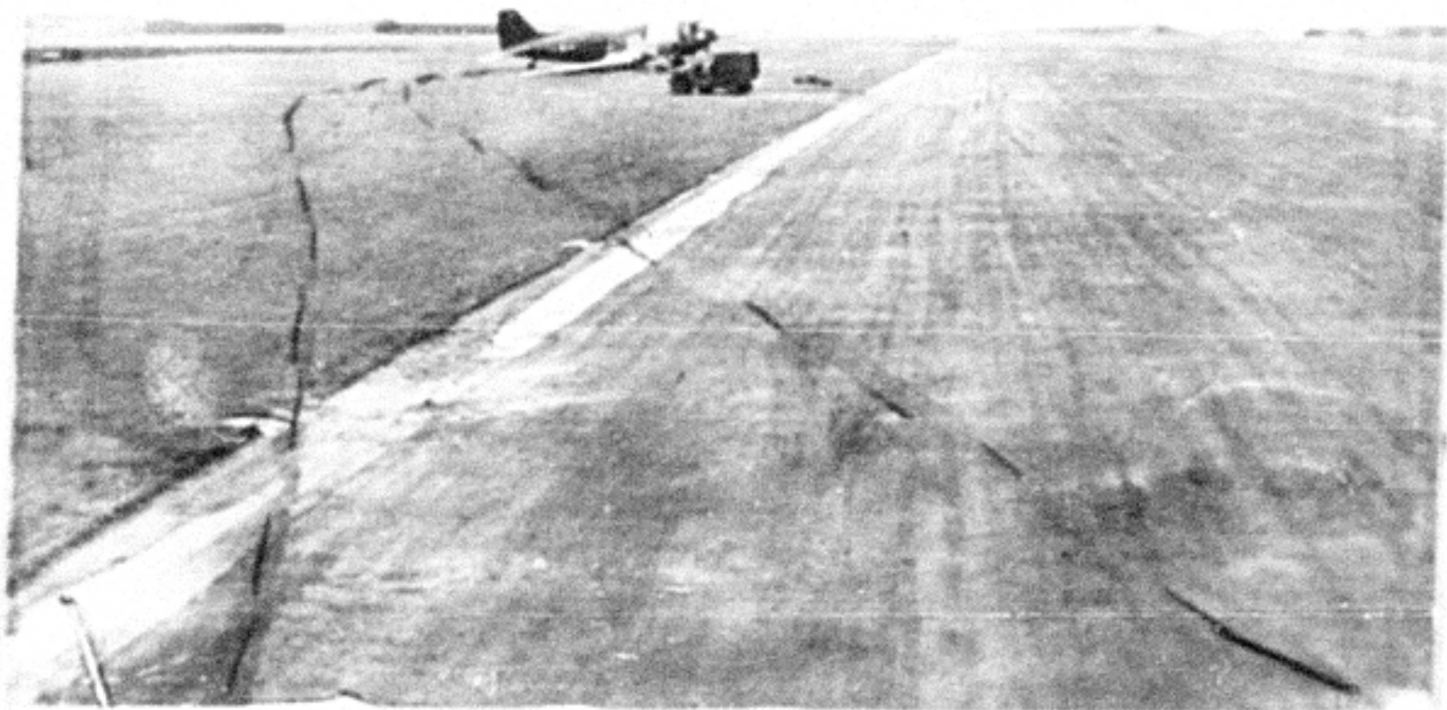


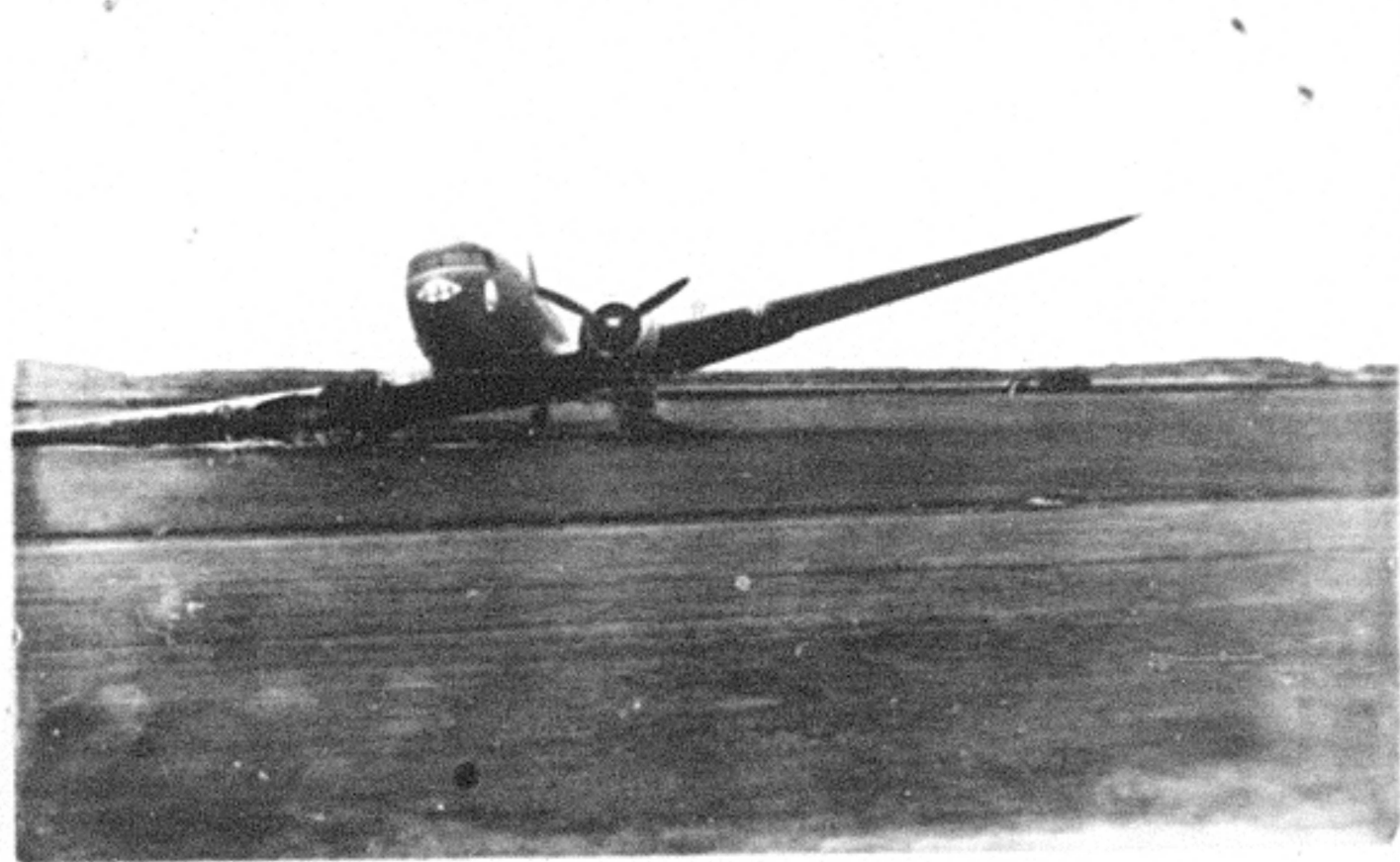
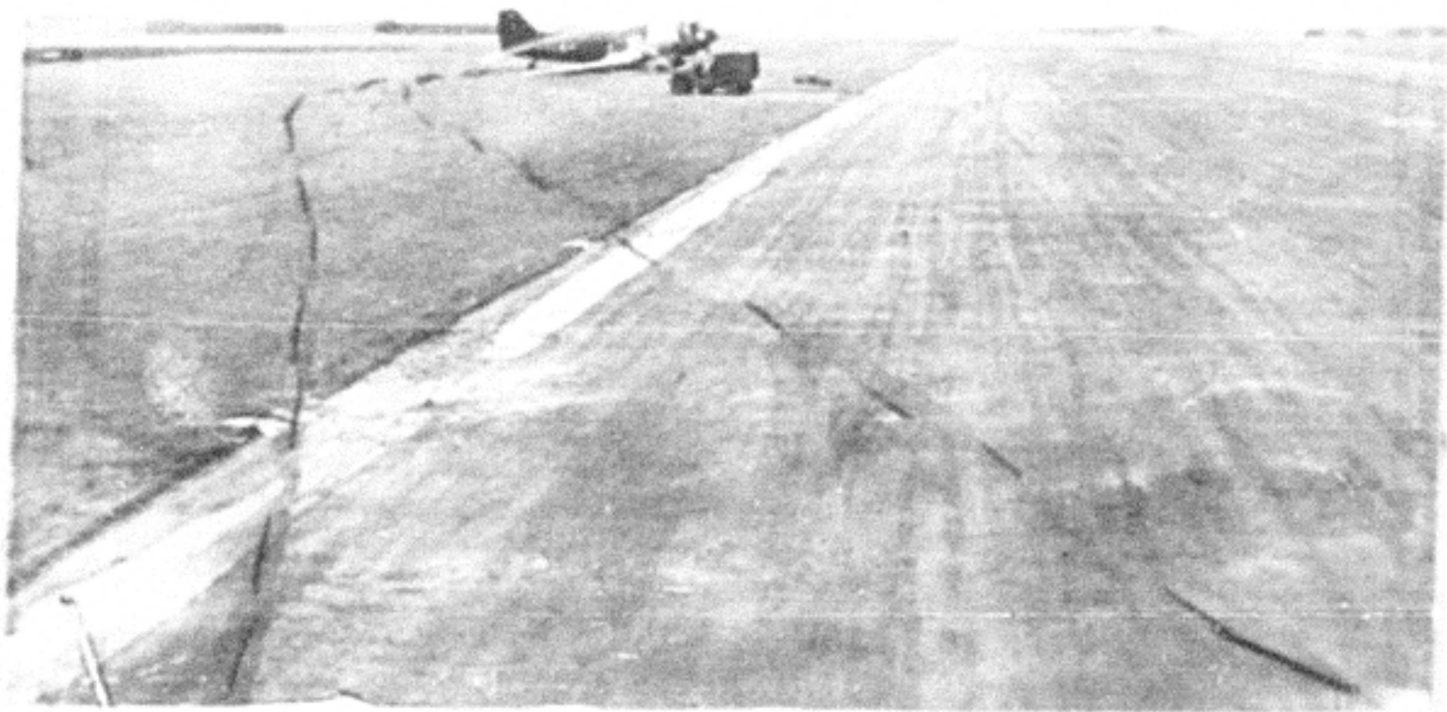


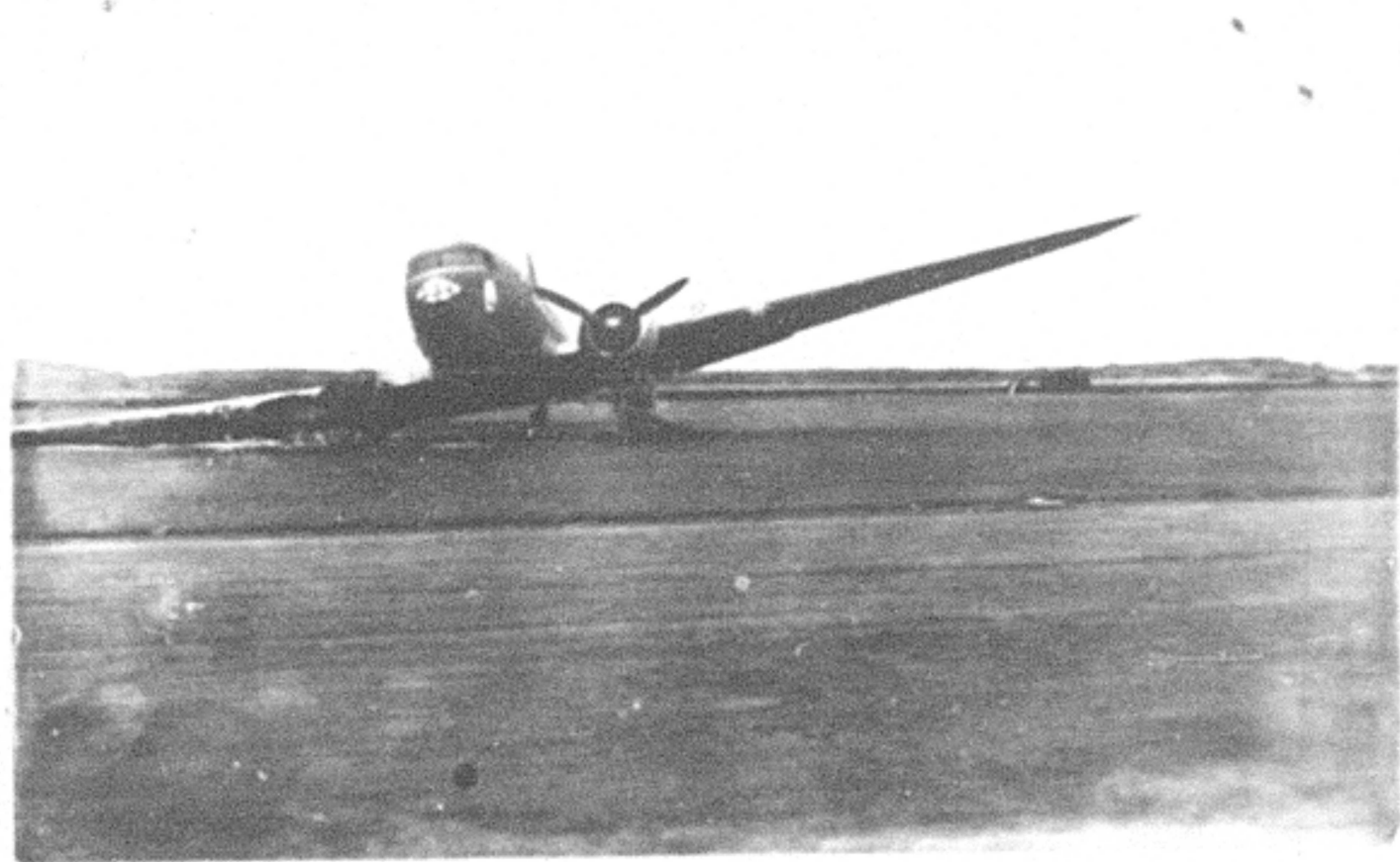
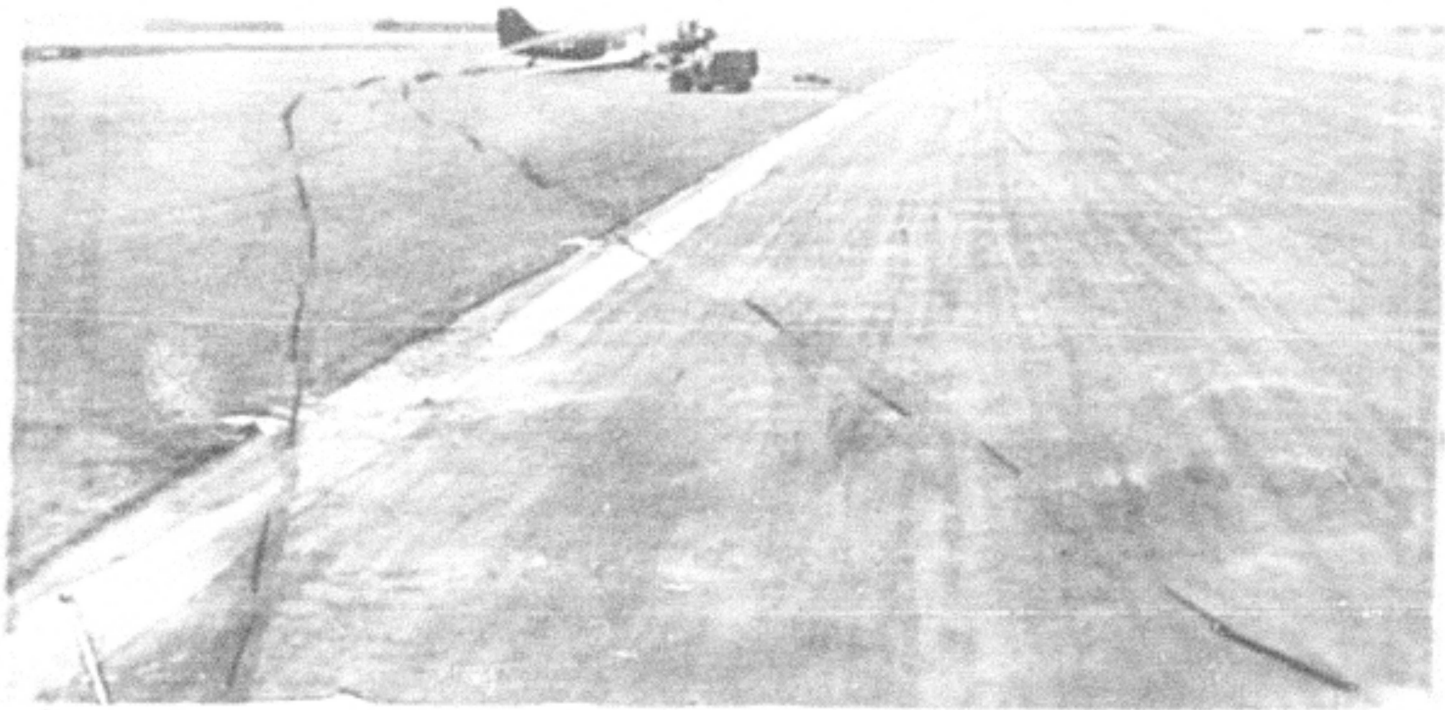


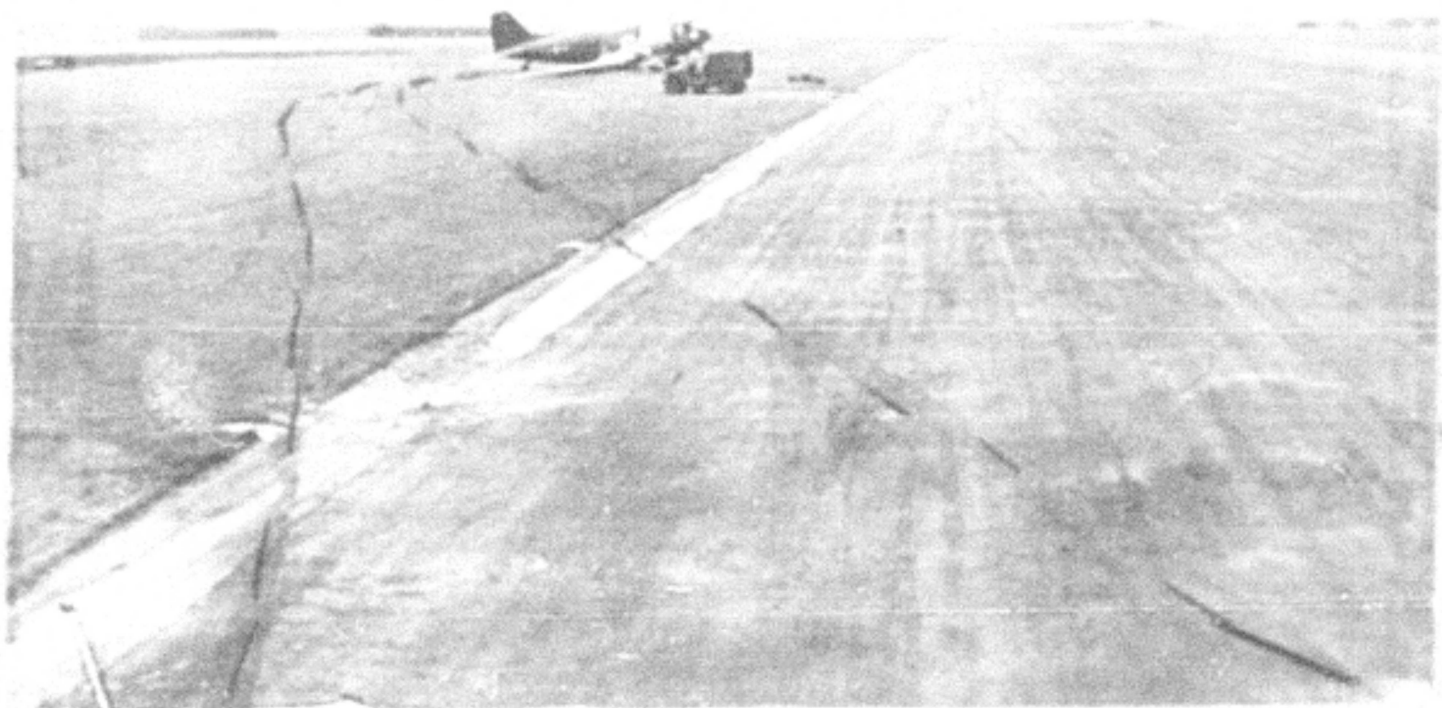
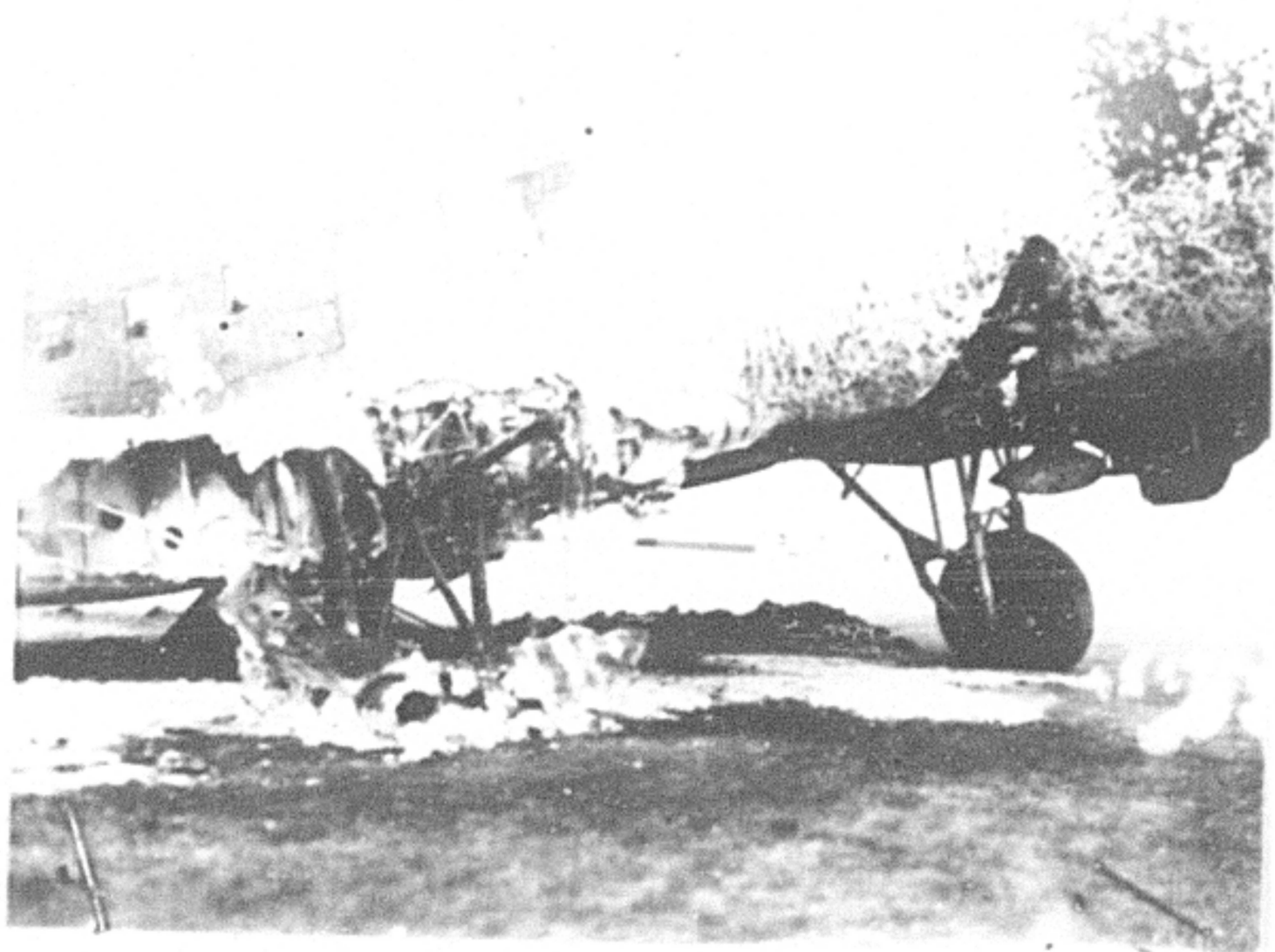


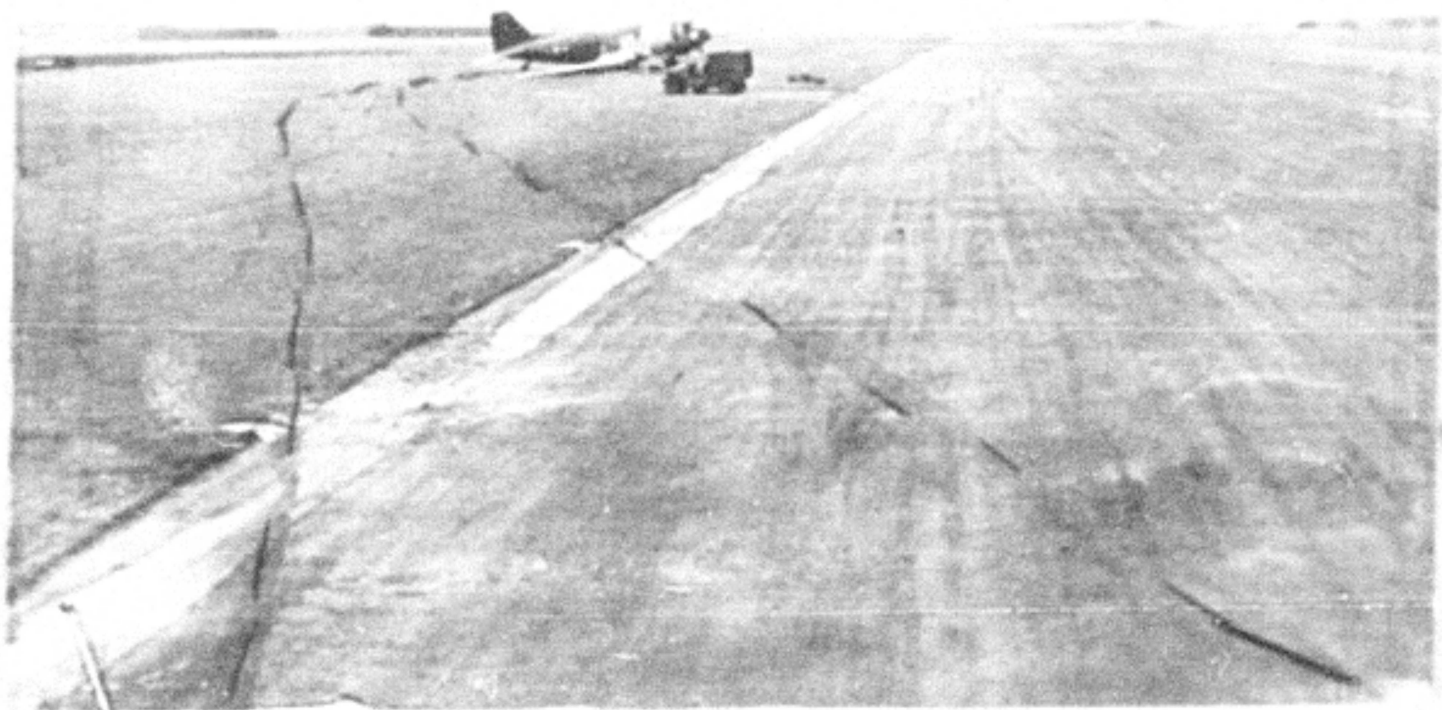
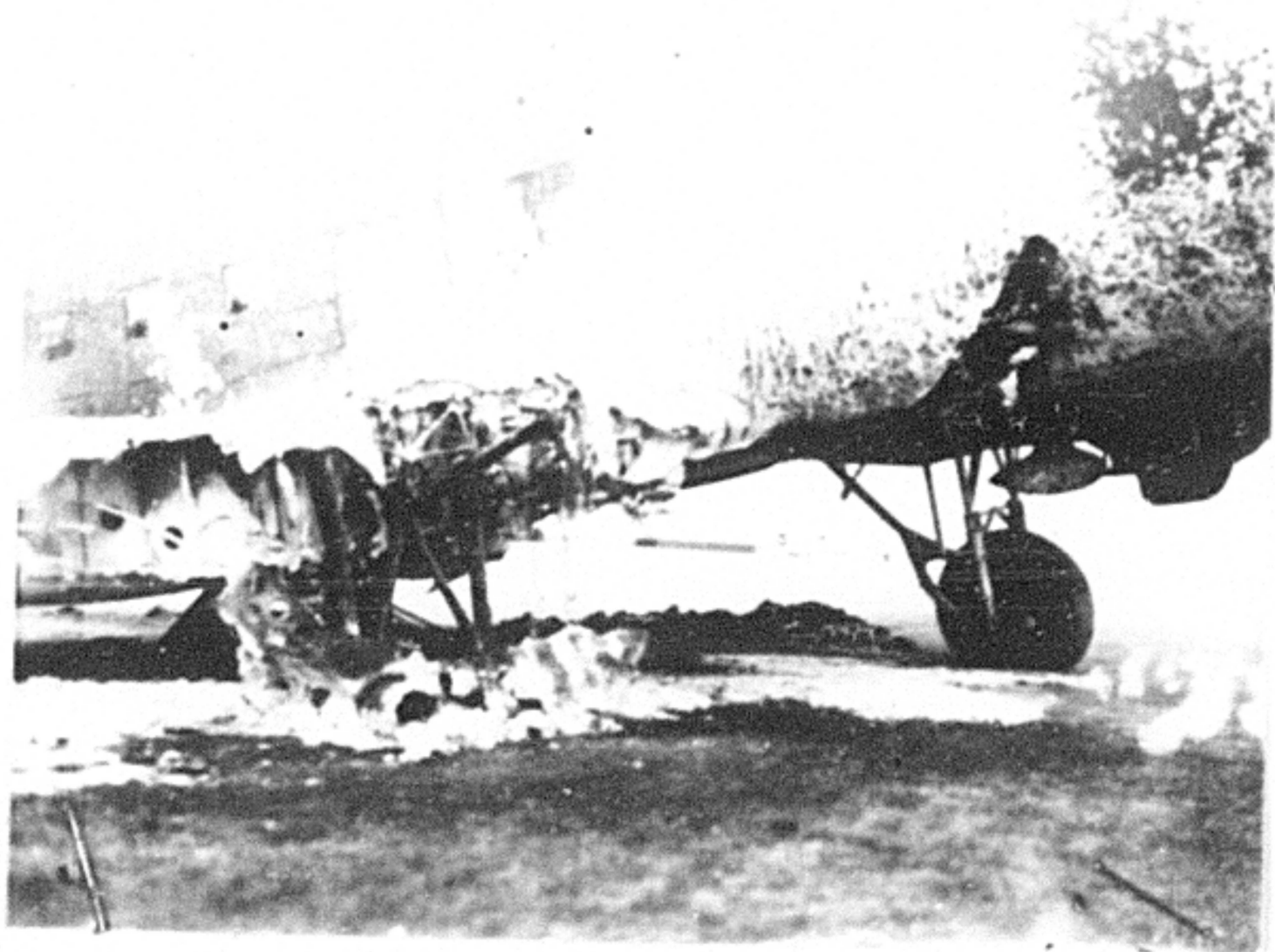


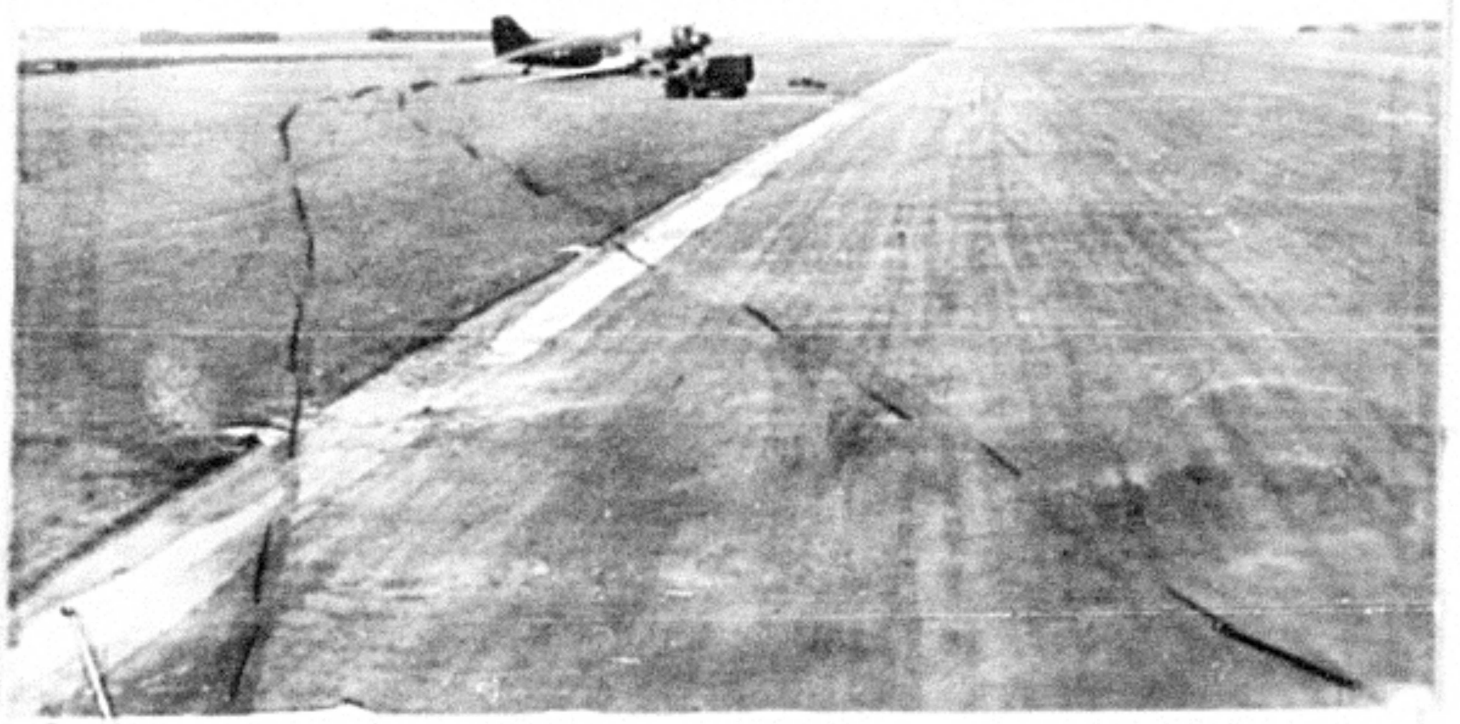
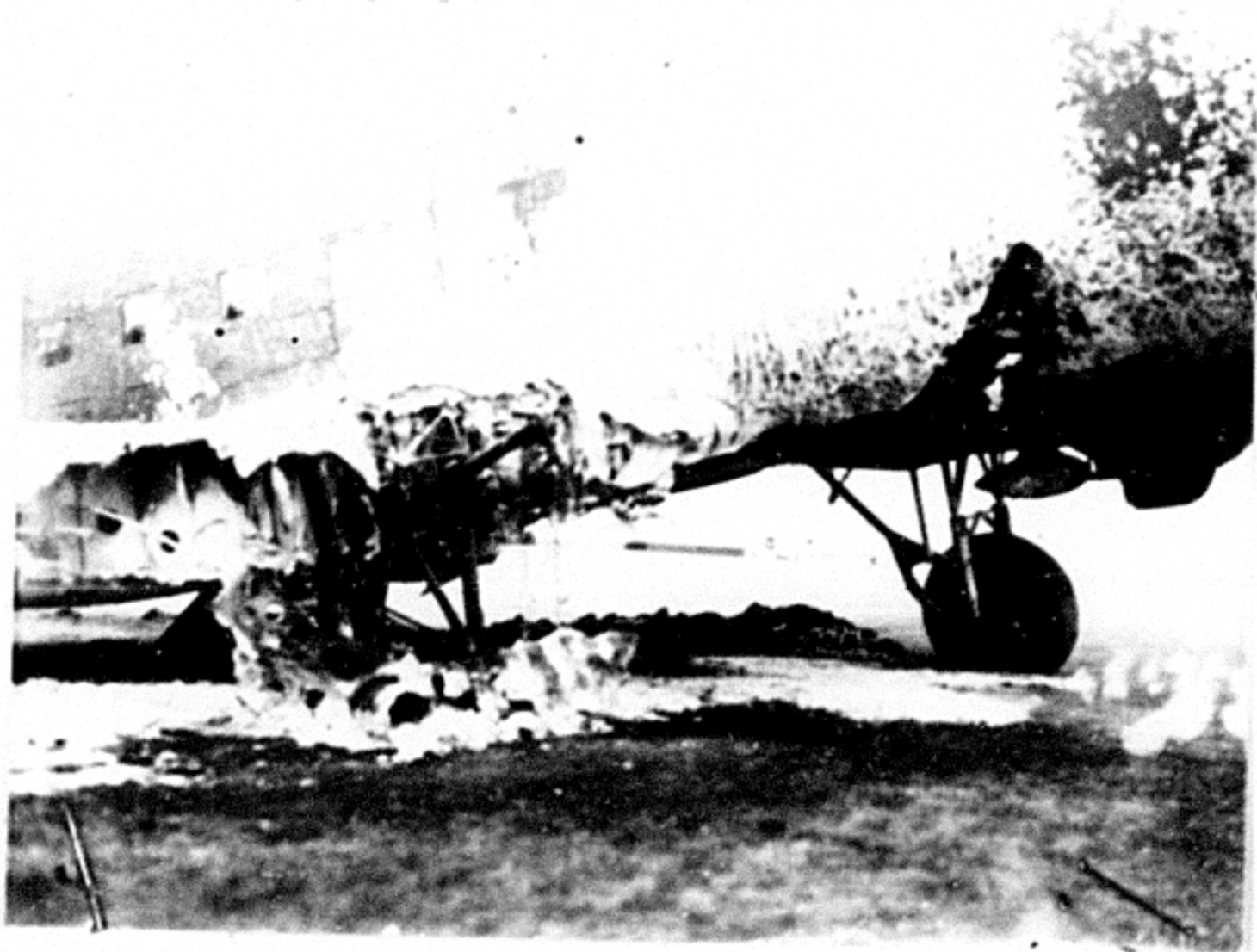












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HEADQUARTERS
1407TH AAF BASE UNIT
EUROPEAN DIVISION AIR TRANSPORT COMMAND
APO 741 U.S. ARMY

OPS/JDR/sds

360.33

12 September 1944

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Report of Aircraft Accident, AAF Form No. 14.

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

1. Transmitted herewith Report of Aircraft Accident, AAF Form No. 14, for C-53, No. 43-2034.

1 Incl: AAF Form No. 14,
w/Statements

(note: 6 photos also att. when recd in CMS)

DISTRIBUTION: Chief, Flying Safety
CG, ATC,
CG, EDATC
CO, 1403d AAF Base Unit.

Stephen V. Cochran
JAMES C. COCHRAN,
Lt. Colonel, Air Corps,
Commanding.

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AC# 40-10213