

AFCRS-1

43-3-21-4

44-12-5-17

27 Sep 60

B-24 Wreckage in LeConte Lake and P-39 Wreckage near Williams, Calif

RICHARD F. GERWIG, Chief, Accident Reporting & Coding Branch

WILLIAM RUSLER, Assistant for Records & Statistics

Maj Clarence W. Brown, Hamilton AFB, California

xx

1. This office received a letter from the Sixth Air Force Reserve Region, Hamilton AFB, which stated that the majority of the wreckage of the B-24 accident that occurred in 1943 had been turned over to the Sixth U.S. Army. However, several small pieces of wreckage from the scene were also delivered to Hamilton AFB by the discoverer of the wreckage. Since the Sixth Army does not desire this wreckage, Hamilton requested that they be permitted to dispose of those pieces in their possession. I informed Maj Brown at Hamilton that they could dispose of the wreckage in accordance with AFR 62-14.
2. Maj Freshwater, also of Hamilton AFB, informed this office that new wreckage had been discovered near Williams, California, and that the aircraft was a P-39. He further stated that a civilian, name unknown, had informed them that he had personally helped carry the body from the aircraft and that this accident had occurred on 21 March 1943.
3. A search of our records revealed that an accident did occur to a P-39N KXXXXXXXXXX Nr 42-9120 on 21 March 1943 piloted by Lionel M. Herman. The records further showed that although the aircraft had originally been listed as missing, it was discovered in May of 1943 and the body removed. Maj Brown and Maj Freshwater stated that this information would be sufficient and that they would take necessary action concerning the wreckage.

ACTION REQUIRED

None

RICHARD F. GERWIG

GS-13w AFCRS-1

AFCRS-1 AFCRS

43-3-21-4
44-12-5-17

43-3-21-4
44-12-5-17

HEADQUARTERS
SIXTH AIR FORCE RESERVE REGION
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
HAMILTON AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: HSRCC

28 AUG 1960

SUBJECT: Aircraft Engines Found on the Mendel Glacier

TO: 1002 IG
Deputy Inspector General for Safety
ATTN: Mr. Gerwig, Ass't for Records & Statistics
AFCRS-1
Norton Air Force Base, California

1. Attached are the photographs discussed in your telephone conversation with Major C. W. Brown, of the Hamilton Subregional Rescue Coordination Center, on 24 August 1960. These photographs of the two aircraft engines and parts found on the Mendel Glacier in Sequoia National Park, California, were taken by the civilian hiker who discovered the wreckage. Several small pieces of wreckage from the scene were also delivered to the Center by the discoverer. At your request, these parts will be disposed of at Hamilton Air Force Base in accordance with AFR 65-48.

2. In answer to your request for information on items recovered from the B-24 wreckage in Le Conte Lake, Headquarters Sixth U. S. Army has been queried. The recovery project officer has informed us that all items recovered have been forwarded to the Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington 25, D. C., ATTN: Mr. Annetti, Memorial Division. Attached is a copy of the Final Report of Special Incident on the B-24 wreckage.

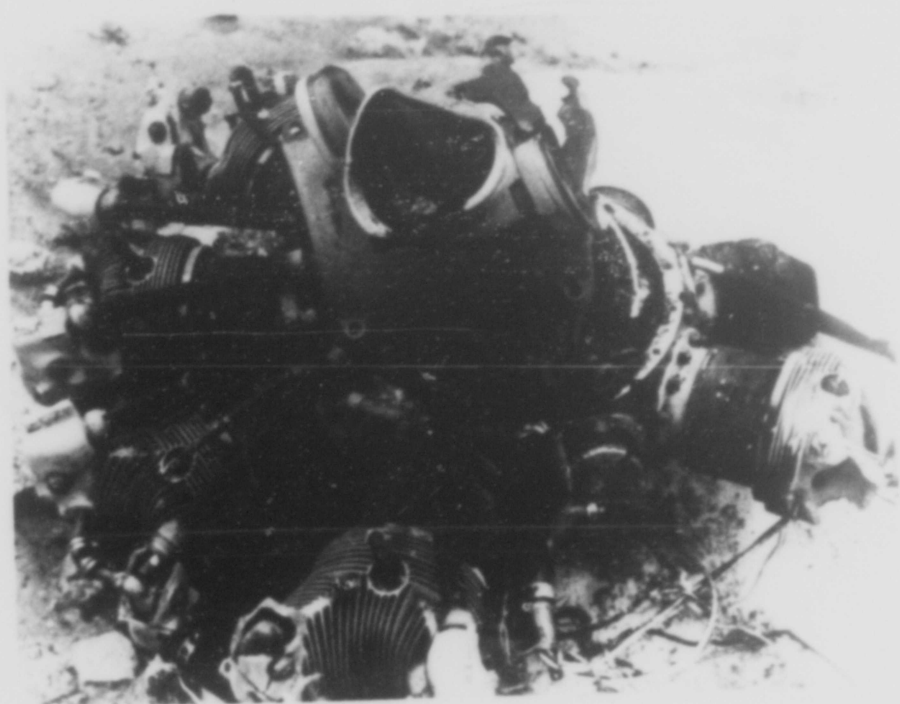
3. Additional information is not available that would establish a definite relationship between the two engines and the B-24 wreckage (which is approximately six miles from the Mendel Glacier).

4. Please do not hesitate to call upon this office for any assistance we may furnish.

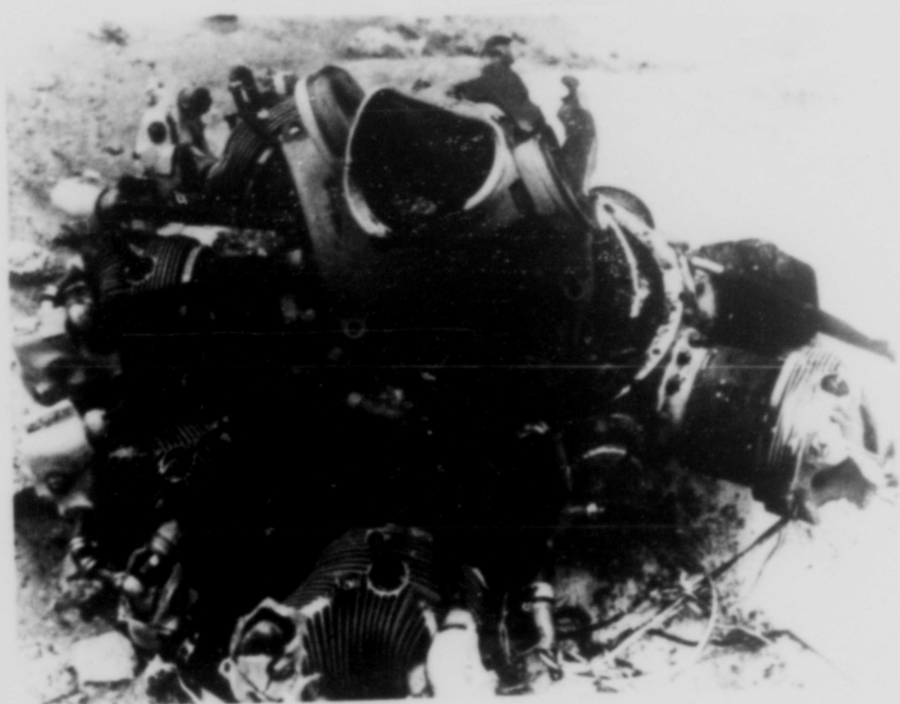
Jack W. Saunders
JACK W. SAUNDERS
Colonel, USAF
Deputy Commander

2 Atch
1. Photographs
2. Final Report of Special Incident (dup)

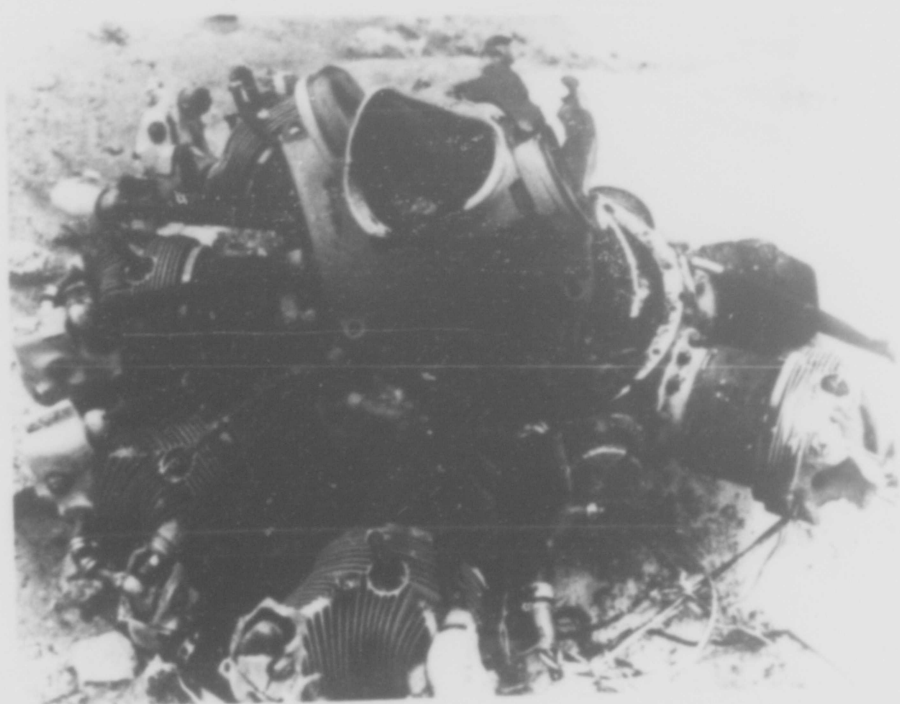
9 CYL ENGINE



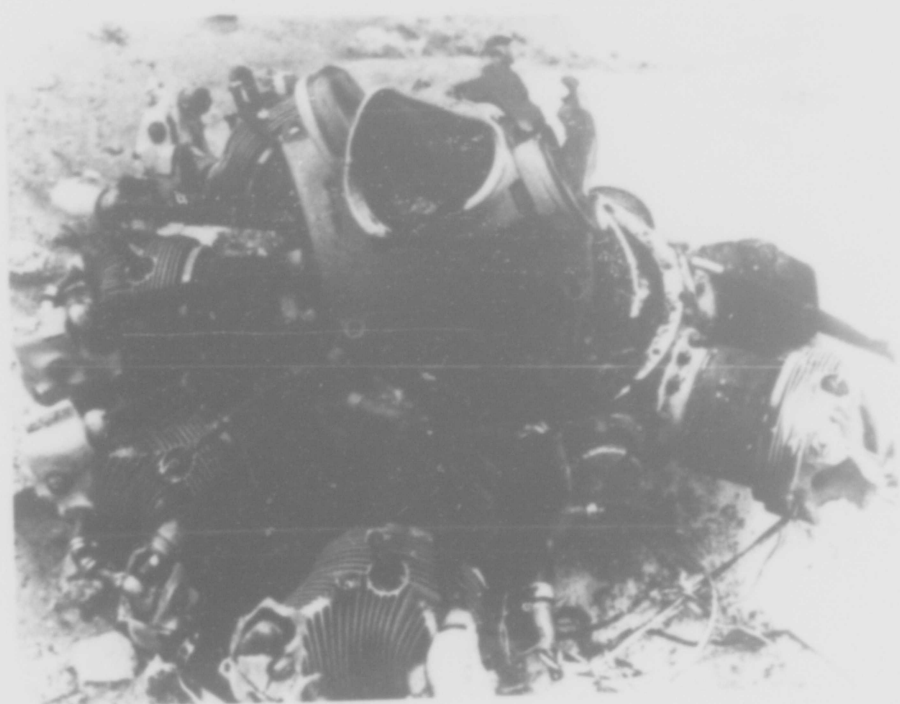
9 2 CYL ENGINE



9 4 CYL ENGINE



9 CYL ENGINE



MENDEL GLACIER



MENDEL GLACIER

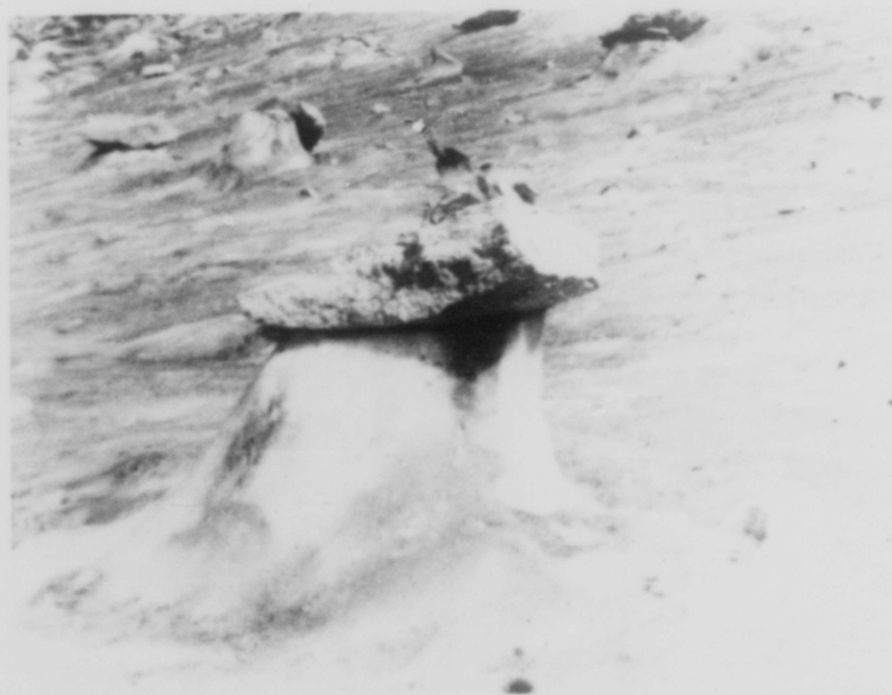


MENDEL GLACIER

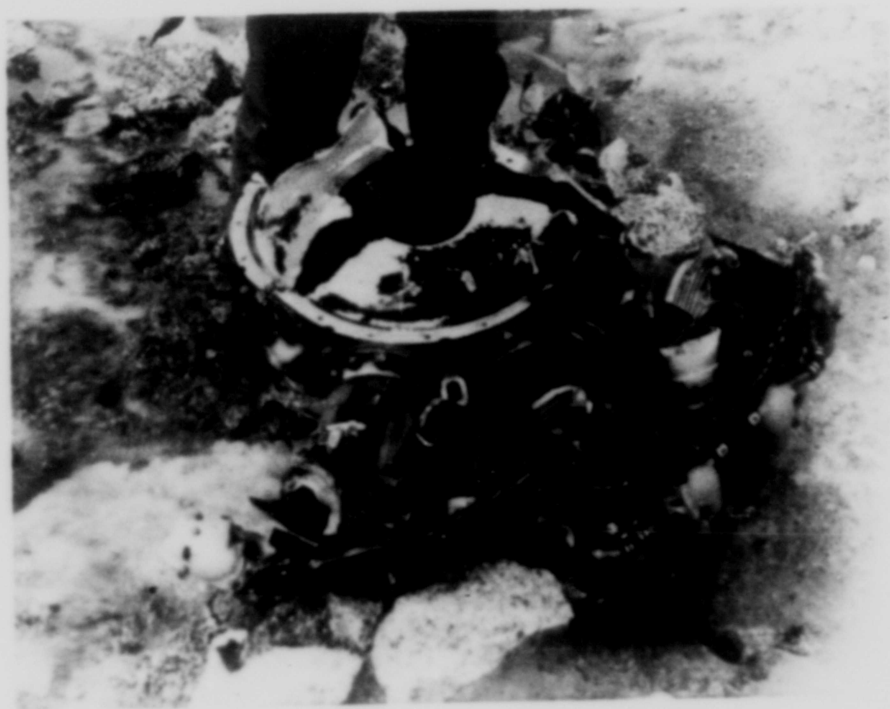


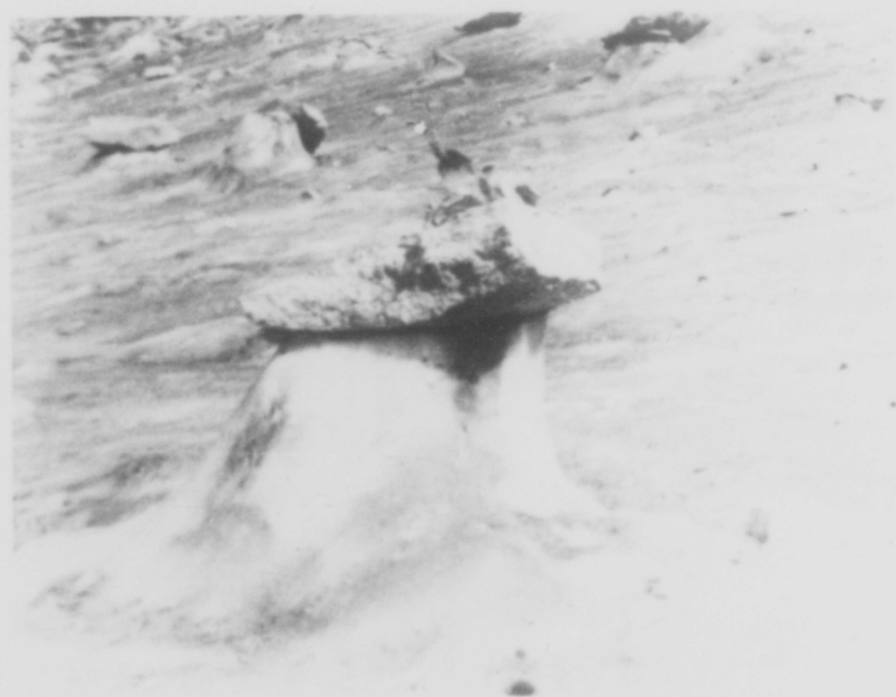
MENDEL GLACIER





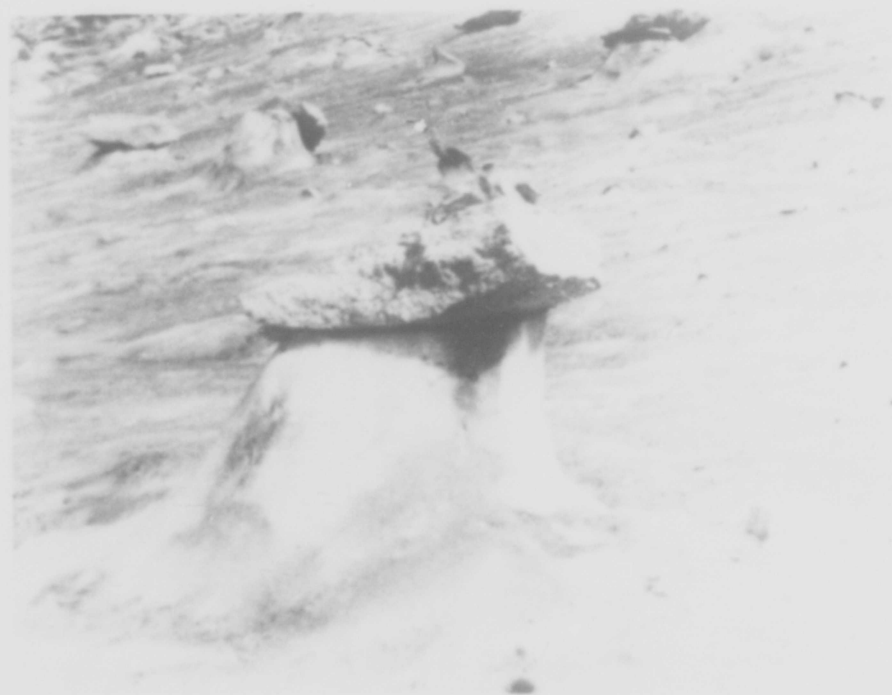
2nd ENGINE





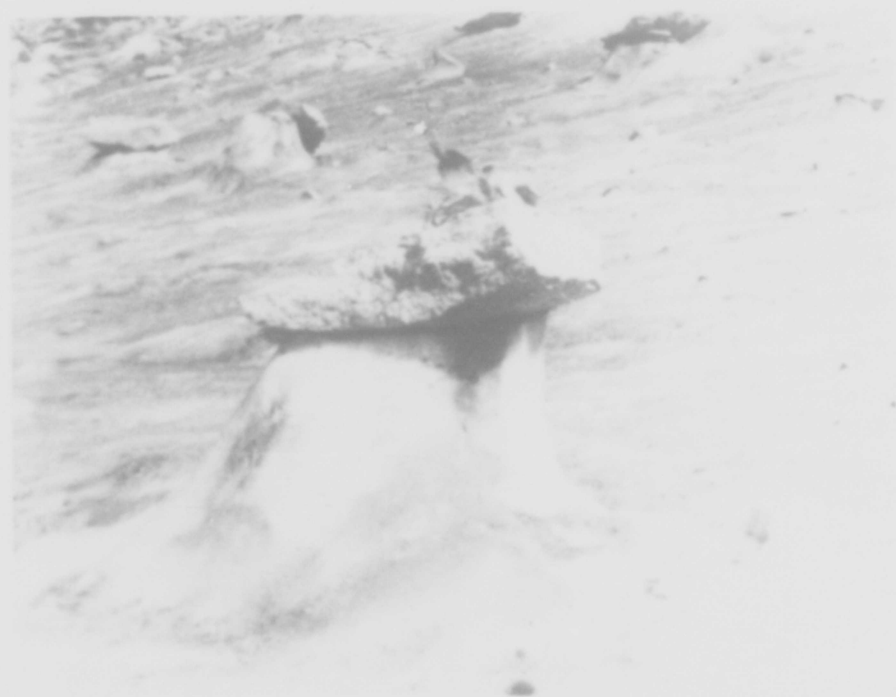
2nd ENGINE





Rad ENGINE

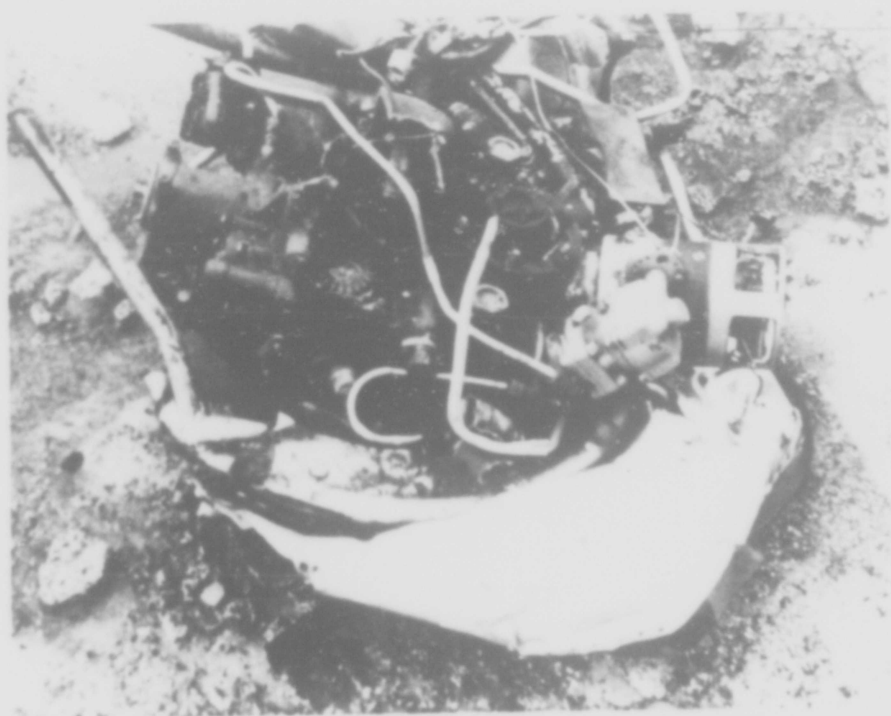




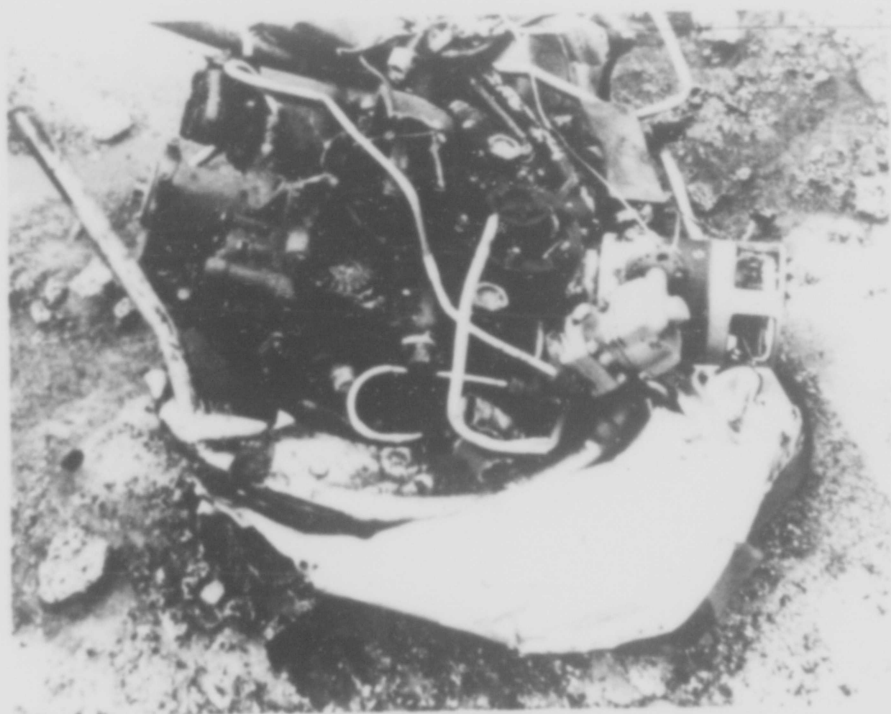
Rad ENGINE



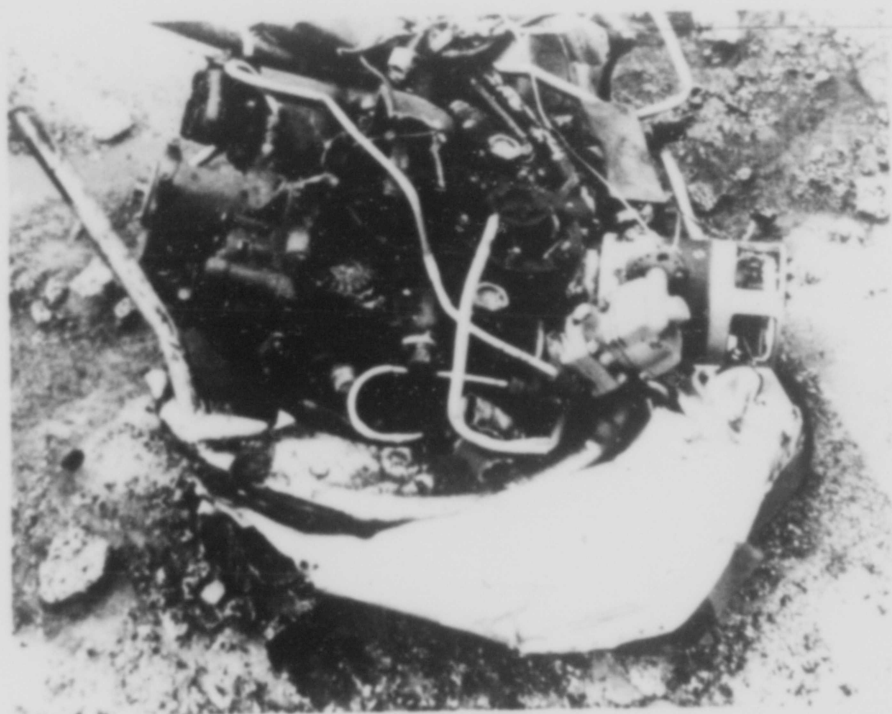
ACCESSORY SECTION



ACCESSORY SECTION



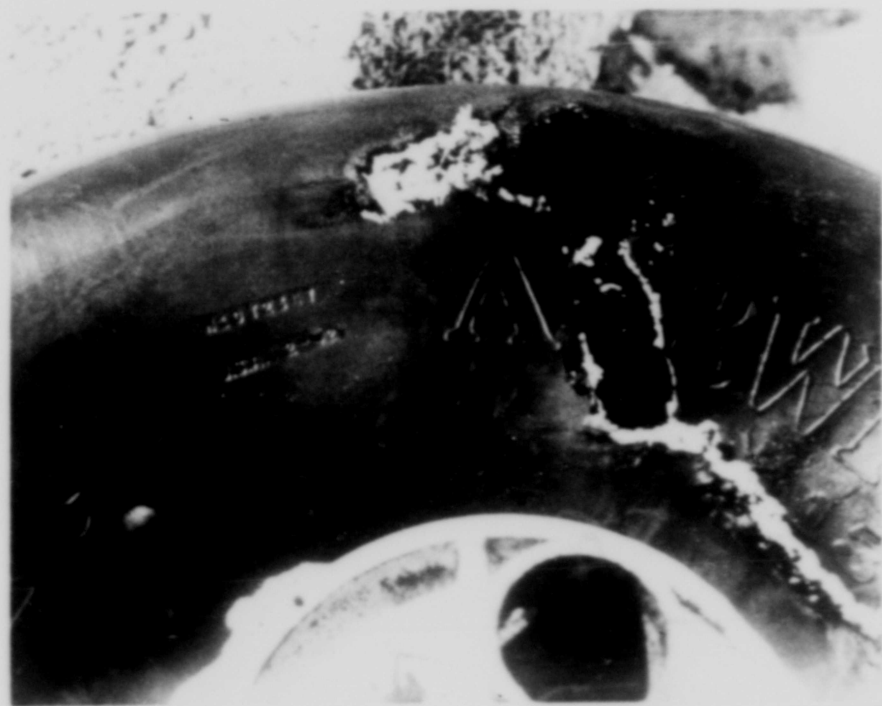
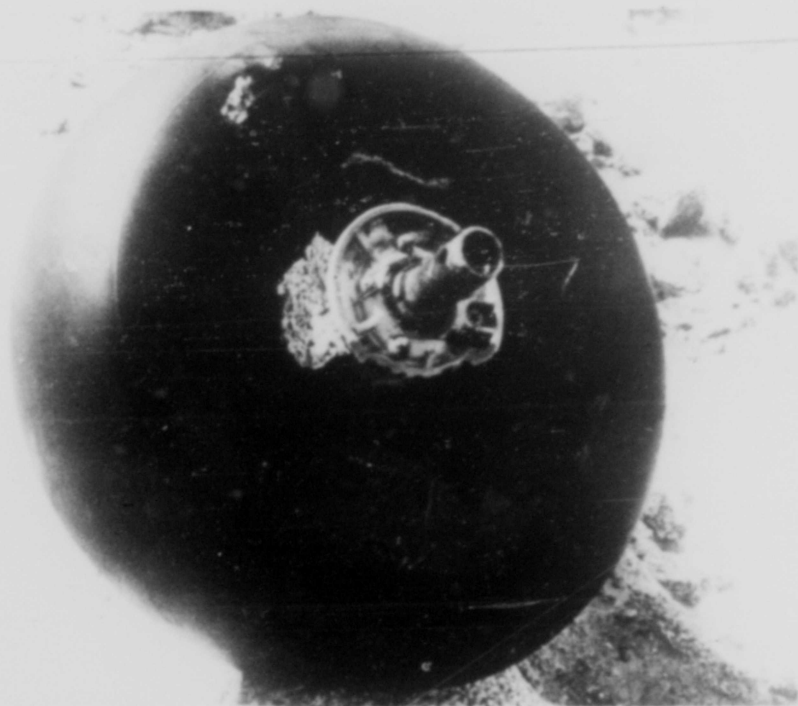
ACCESSORY SECTION



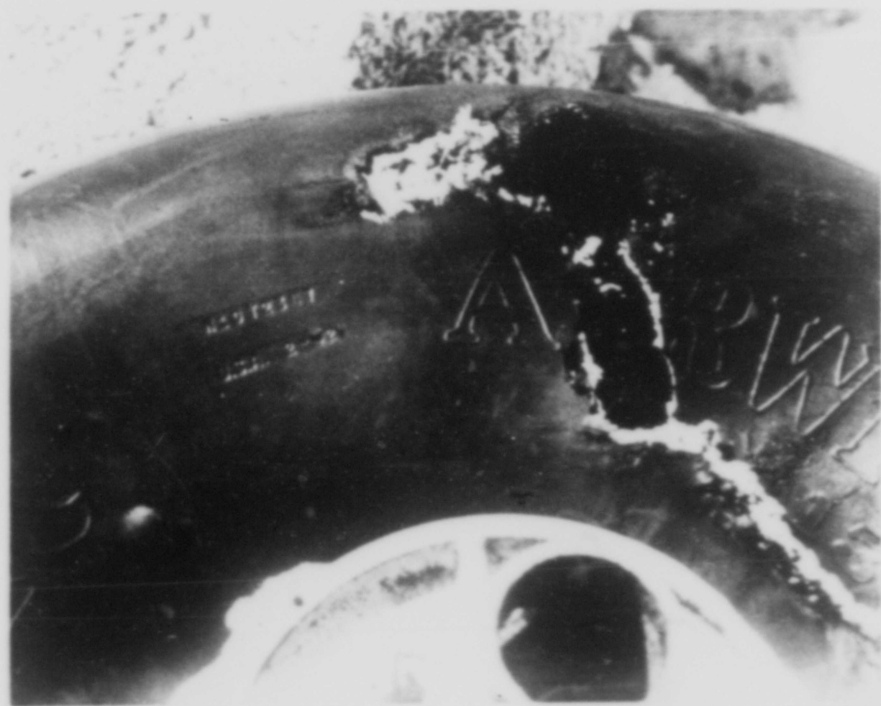
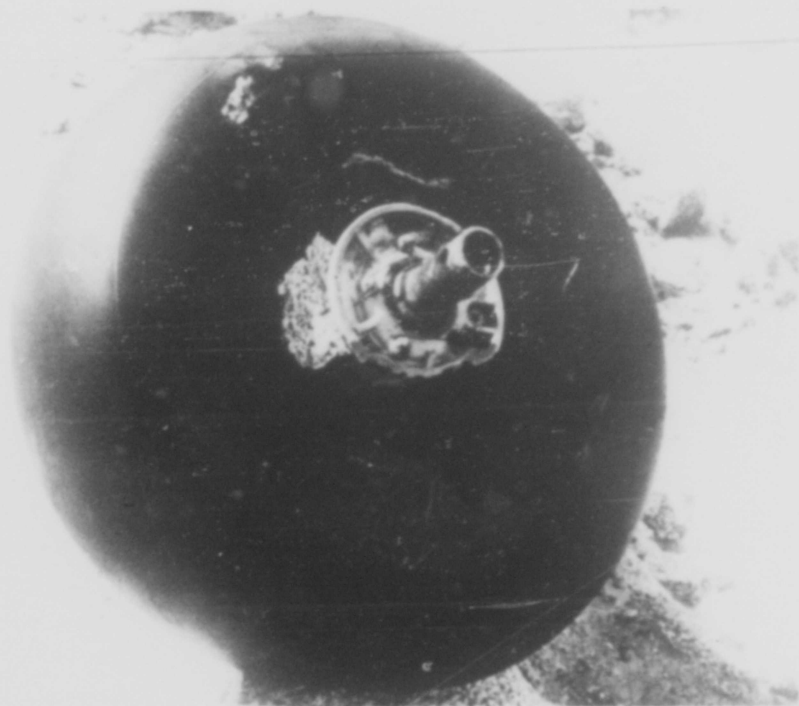
ACCESSORY SECTION



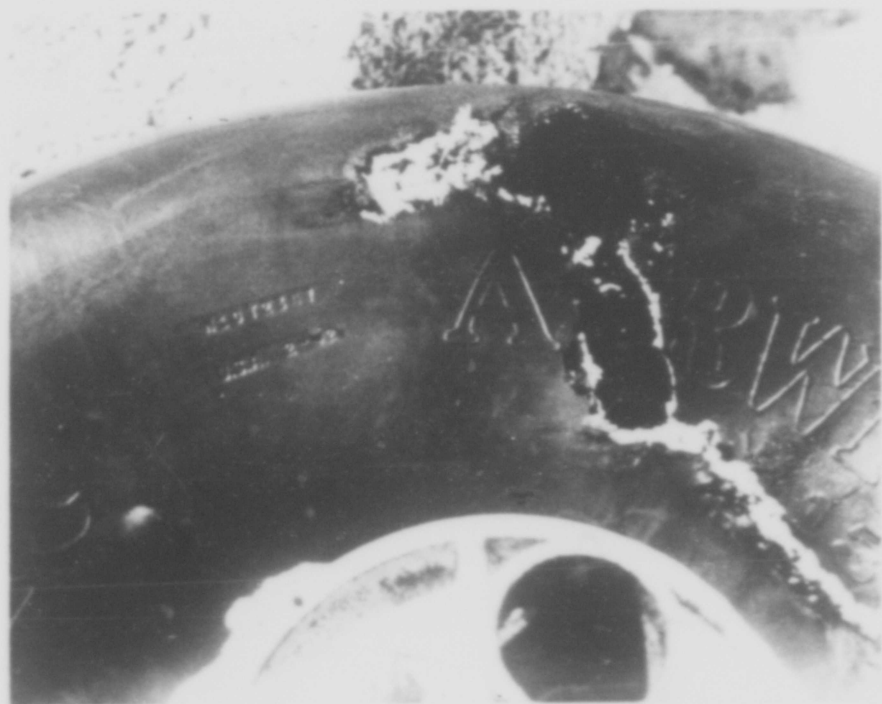
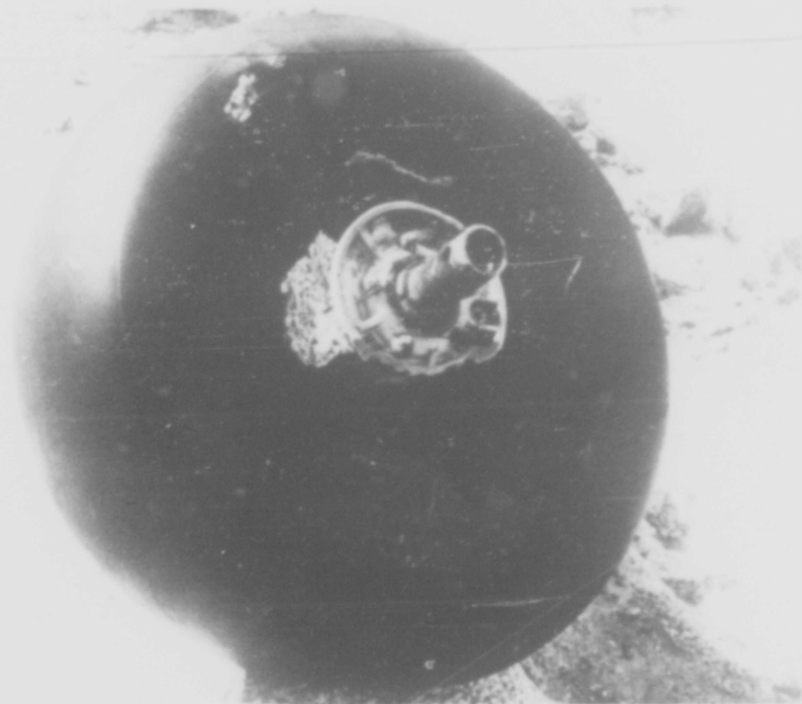
150 YDS FROM 2 ENGINES



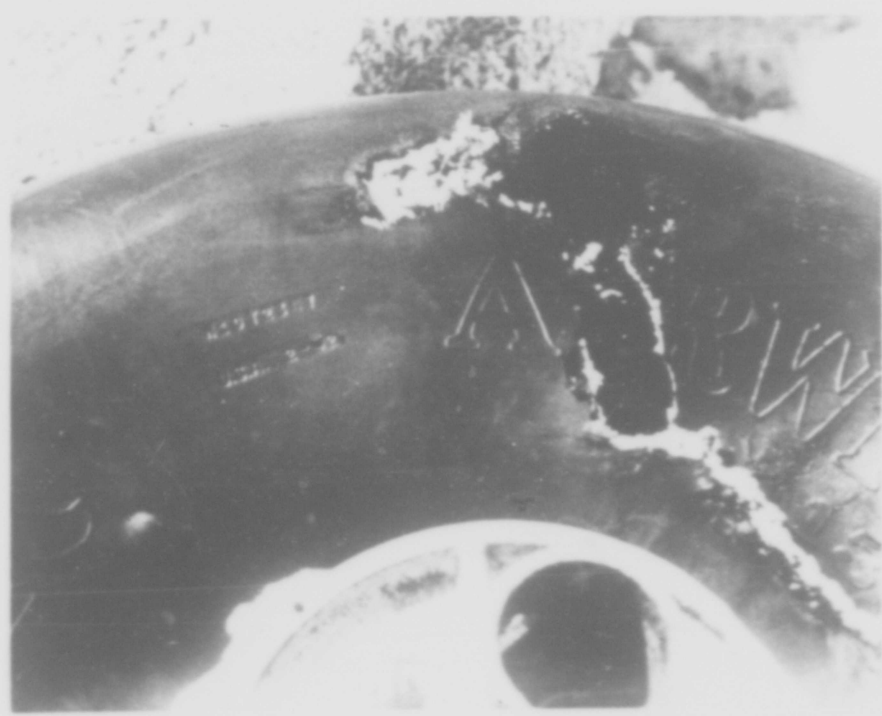
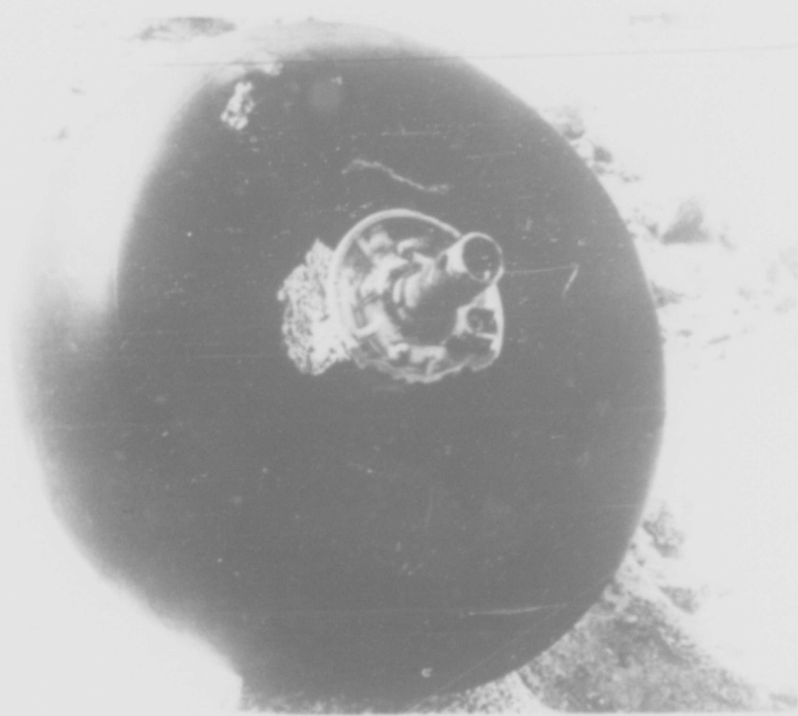
150 YDS FROM 2 ENGINES



150 YDS FROM 2 ENGINES



150 YDS FROM 2 ENGINES



HAMILTON SUBREGIONAL RESCUE COORDINATION CENTER
CONTINENTAL AIR COMMAND
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
HAMILTON AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

REPLY TO
ATTN OPI HSRCC

26 August 1960

SUBJECT: Final Report of Special Incident

TO: CONAC (DCS/O)

1. Objective: Investigation of B-24 wreckage found by U. S. Forest Rangers at the 11400 ft level in Sequoia National Park, California, at coordinates 3706N 11837W, on 27 July 1960.

2. Summary of Action:

a. The Hamilton Subregional Rescue Coordination Center (SRCC) was advised at 28/0040Z July 1960, by Chief Ranger Hirst, Sequoia National Park, that one of his rangers had found a crashed aircraft on 27 July 1960. A Flight Report Log Book with the name "Lt William T. Cronin" was found near the main wreckage. Only part of the fuselage was visible, with the remainder of the main wreckage below the surface of Le Conte Lake. One-half mile from the lake, a propeller blade was found which was 13 inches wide, and had the following markings, "NKC 7521BWG6477A-0," and "installed 5-10-43." A flight boot with the remains of a human foot and leg and an open parachute were recovered from the lake by the ranger. Scattered bits of wreckage and instruments were discovered in the area. Plant growth partially covering these bits of wreckage indicated the wreckage to be quite old. One-half mile southwest of the lake, a portion of the left wing of the aircraft was found. This wing section was marked with a white star on a blue background and white side stripes. The ranger sighting this wreckage had reported that from the general appearance of the aircraft, he was fairly positive it was a B-24.

b. The Hamilton SRCC contacted the IG, Director of Flying Safety, Norton AFB, Calif, at 28/0100Z July 1960, 0100Z July 1960, and requested a records check be accomplished in an attempt to identify this aircraft. At 28/0350Z July 1960, the USAF Command Post was advised of the incident. USAF Command Post advised the SRCC they would have a records check initiated in an attempt to identify the aircraft wreckage. The Duty Officer indicated that further assistance was not required of the SRCC.

c. On 28 July 1960, the local newspapers carried a detailed account of the aircraft wreckage sighting. News releases were not made through the SRCC. At 28/1600Z July, Lt Colonel H. J. Cronin, Headquarters 28 Air Division, (SAGE), Hamilton AFB, Calif, informed the SRCC that he had read the local newspaper accounts and stated he felt sure the wreckage was that of a B-24 wreckage in which his brother, 2/Lt William T. Cronin, had disappeared in December 1943. He further stated the aircraft was a B-24 assigned to the U. S. Army Air Corps at Hammer Field, Calif. It had been lost on a training flight from Tucson, Arizona, to Fresno, California.

d. The Hamilton SRCC contacted Headquarters Sixth U. S. Army, Presidio of San Francisco, California, at 28/1630Z July 1960, and informed them of Lt Col Cronin's report. Sixth Army had been in contact with Headquarters U. S. Army concerning the aircraft wreckage and they would advise their headquarters of this additional information.

e. Col Wheeling, S-1, Sixth U. S. Army Headquarters, contacted the SRCC on 2 August 1960, requesting assistance in obtaining an H-43 helicopter to support a ground team of U. S. Army personnel in their investigation of the aircraft wreckage. Arrangements were made with Stead AFB, Nevada to furnish an H-43 and an H-21 aircraft to accomplish this mission. The helicopters departed Stead AFB at 03/1230Z August 1960, enroute to Bishop, Calif, using Bishop airport as an advance base of operations. Stead AFB's fixed-wing aircraft were used to furnish logistical support to the USAF forces involved. The Bishop Squadron, Calif CAP Wing, furnished light aircraft to perform reconnaissance and to fly top cover during this investigation.

f. The following personnel were established as project officers on the B-24 wreckage investigation:

Major Thayer - Hq 6th Army, Presidio of San Francisco -- On-scene Commander.

Major Thompson - Stead AFB, Nevada.

Ranger Hirst - Sequoia National Park, Calif.

Major Lukacik - Bishop Sq, Calif CAP Wing.

Col Wheeling - Hq 6th Army, Presidio of San Francisco, Calif.

g. Three radial engines were found at the 13000 ft level on a glacier near 3711N 11841W, prior to this investigation. These engines are located approximately six miles from the B-24 wreckage. It has not been determined whether these engines are from this aircraft. An attempt will be made by the U. S. Forest Service in September 1960, to relocate these engines and make identification.

h. The on-scene commander released the USAF aircraft to return to their home station on 5 August 1960. The Sixth Army project officer contacted the SRCC at 05/2100Z, and requested assistance in determining whether any ordnance was aboard the aircraft when it disappeared. He indicated that numerous rounds of 50 calibre ammunition had been found in the area. The SRCC contacted the Norton AFB Flying Safety Section and ascertained that the records indicated no ordnance was aboard the aircraft.

i. On 6 August 1960, the Sixth Army project officer informed the SRCC that the main part of the fuselage and one engine had been located in deep water and the tail section and part of a wing section had been recovered.

j. Colonel Wheeling, Sixth Army project officer, advised the SRCC at 11/2300Z August that operations had been suspended in an attempt to locate crewmembers in the wreckage of the B-24. Extremely dangerous conditions at Lake Le Conte, consisting of silt and shale bottom, underwater slides, water temperatures of 33 to 35 degrees Fahrenheit and depths of 120 to 150 feet precluded further safe operations.

k. One human torso had been recovered in the lake, and several human bones were located in the surrounding area. Positive identification of remains or the aircraft had not been completed.

3. Hours and Sorties Flown by Each Participating Agency: Stead AFB, Nevada participated with several aircraft flying 15 sorties for 20 plus 30 hours. The Calif CAP Wing flew 6 sorties for 8 plus 25 hours. This report includes USAF and CAP participation only.

5. Results: Since further assistance was not required by the SRCC and since the controlling agency had suspended operations, this special incident was closed at 12/2222Z August 1960.

Clarence W. Brown

for CLARENCE W. BROWN
Major, USAF
Chief, Hamilton Subregional
Rescue Coordination Center

1 Atch
0-62 (dup)

Copies to: USAF Command Post,
Stead AFB, ATC-Randolph AFB, Tex,
Sixth Army, Calif CAP, Hq CAP,
Bishop Sq CAP, Sequoia Natl Park

HAMILTON SUBREGIONAL RESCUE COORDINATION CENTER
CONTINENTAL AIR COMMAND
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
HAMILTON AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: HSRCC

26 August 1960

SUBJECT: Final Report of Special Incident

TO: CONAC (DCS/0)

1. Objective: Investigation of B-24 wreckage found by U. S. Forest Rangers at the 11400 ft level in Sequoia National Park, California, at coordinates 3706N 11837W, on 27 July 1960.

2. Summary of Action:

a. The Hamilton Subregional Rescue Coordination Center (SRCC) was advised at 28/0040Z July 1960, by Chief Ranger Hirst, Sequoia National Park, that one of his rangers had found a crashed aircraft on 27 July 1960. A Flight Report Log Book with the name "Lt William T. Cronin" was found near the main wreckage. Only part of the fuselage was visible, with the remainder of the main wreckage below the surface of Le Conte Lake. One-half mile from the lake, a propeller blade was found which was 13 inches wide, and had the following markings, "NKC 7521BWG6477A-0," and "installed 5-10-43." A flight boot with the remains of a human foot and leg and an open parachute were recovered from the lake by the ranger. Scattered bits of wreckage and instruments were discovered in the area. Plant growth partially covering these bits of wreckage indicated the wreckage to be quite old. One-half mile southwest of the lake, a portion of the left wing of the aircraft was found. This wing section was marked with a white star on a blue background and white side stripes. The ranger sighting this wreckage had reported that from the general appearance of the aircraft, he was fairly positive it was a B-24.

b. The Hamilton SRCC contacted the IG, Director of Flying Safety, Norton AFB, Calif, at 28/0100Z July 1960, 0100Z July 1960, and requested a records check be accomplished in an attempt to identify this aircraft. At 28/0350Z July 1960, the USAF Command Post was advised of the incident. USAF Command Post advised the SRCC they would have a records check initiated in an attempt to identify the aircraft wreckage. The Duty Officer indicated that further assistance was not required of the SRCC.

c. On 28 July 1960, the local newspapers carried a detailed account of the aircraft wreckage sighting. News releases were not made through the SRCC. At 28/1600Z July, Lt Colonel H. J. Cronin, Headquarters 28 Air Division, (SAGE), Hamilton AFB, Calif, informed the SRCC that he had read the local newspaper accounts and stated he felt sure the wreckage was that of a B-24 wreckage in which his brother, 2/Lt William T. Cronin, had disappeared in December 1943. He further stated the aircraft was a B-24 assigned to the U. S. Army Air Corps at Hammer Field, Calif. It had been lost on a training flight from Tucson, Arizona, to Fresno, California.

d. The Hamilton SRCC contacted Headquarters Sixth U. S. Army, Presidio of San Francisco, California, at 28/1630Z July 1960, and informed them of Lt Col Cronin's report. Sixth Army had been in contact with Headquarters U. S. Army concerning the aircraft wreckage and they would advise their headquarters of this additional information.

e. Col Wheeling, S-1, Sixth U. S. Army Headquarters, contacted the SRCC on 2 August 1960, requesting assistance in obtaining an H-43 helicopter to support a ground team of U. S. Army personnel in their investigation of the aircraft wreckage. Arrangements were made with Stead AFB, Nevada to furnish an H-43 and an H-21 aircraft to accomplish this mission. The helicopters departed Stead AFB at 03/1230Z August 1960, enroute to Bishop, Calif, using Bishop airport as an advance base of operations. Stead AFB's fixed-wing aircraft were used to furnish logistical support to the USAF forces involved. The Bishop Squadron, Calif CAP Wing, furnished light aircraft to perform reconnaissance and to fly top cover during this investigation.

f. The following personnel were established as project officers on the B-24 wreckage investigation:

Major Thayer - Hq 6th Army, Presidio of San Francisco -- On-scene Commander.

Major Thompson - Stead AFB, Nevada.

Ranger Hirst - Sequoia National Park, Calif.

Major Lukacik - Bishop Sq, Calif CAP Wing.

Col Wheeling - Hq 6th Army, Presidio of San Francisco, Calif.

g. Three radial engines were found at the 13000 ft level on a glacier near 3711N 11841W, prior to this investigation. These engines are located approximately six miles from the B-24 wreckage. It has not been determined whether these engines are from this aircraft. An attempt will be made by the U. S. Forest Service in September 1960, to relocate these engines and make identification.

h. The on-scene commander released the USAF aircraft to return to their home station on 5 August 1960. The Sixth Army project officer contacted the SRCC at 05/2100Z, and requested assistance in determining whether any ordnance was aboard the aircraft when it disappeared. He indicated that numerous rounds of 50 calibre ammunition had been found in the area. The SRCC contacted the Norton AFB Flying Safety Section and ascertained that the records indicated no ordnance was aboard the aircraft.

i. On 6 August 1960, the Sixth Army project officer informed the SRCC that the main part of the fuselage and one engine had been located in deep water and the tail section and part of a wing section had been recovered.

j. Colonel Wheeling, Sixth Army project officer, advised the SRCC at 11/2300Z August that operations had been suspended in an attempt to locate crewmembers in the wreckage of the B-24. Extremely dangerous conditions at Lake Le Conte, consisting of silt and shale bottom, underwater slides, water temperatures of 33 to 35 degrees Fahrenheit and depths of 120 to 150 feet precluded further safe operations.

k. One human torso had been recovered in the lake, and several human bones were located in the surrounding area. Positive identification of remains or the aircraft had not been completed.

3. Hours and Sorties Flown by Each Participating Agency: Stead AFB, Nevada participated with several aircraft flying 15 sorties for 20 plus 30 hours. The Calif CAP Wing flew 6 sorties for 8 plus 25 hours. This report includes USAF and CAP participation only.

5. Results: Since further assistance was not required by the SRCC and since the controlling agency had suspended operations, this special incident was closed at 12/2222Z August 1960.

Clarence W. Brown
for CLARENCE W. BROWN
Major, USAF
Chief, Hamilton Subregional
Rescue Coordination Center

1 Attachment
0-62 (dup)

Copies to: USAF Command Post,
Stead AFB, ATC-Randolph AFB, Tex,
Sixth Army, Calif CAP, Hq CAP,
Bishop Sq CAP, Sequoia Natl Park

HSRCC

Aircraft Engines Found on the Mendel Glacier

1002 IG

Deputy Inspector General for Safety

ATTN: Mr. Gerwig, Ass't for Records & Statistics

AFCRS-1

Norton Air Force Base, California

1. Attached are the photographs discussed in your telephone conversation with Major C. W. Brown, of the Hamilton Subregional Rescue Coordination Center, on 24 August 1960. These photographs of the two aircraft engines and parts found on the Mendel Glacier in Sequoia National Park, California, were taken by the civilian hiker who discovered the wreckage. Several small pieces of wreckage from the scene were also delivered to the Center by the discoverer. At your request, these parts will be disposed of at Hamilton Air Force Base in accordance with AFR 65-48.

2. In answer to your request for information on items recovered from the B-24 wreckage in Le Conte Lake, Headquarters Sixth U. S. Army has been queried. The recovery project officer has informed us that all items recovered have been forwarded to the Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington 25, D. C., ATTN: Mr. Annetti, Memorial Division. Attached is a copy of the Final Report of Special Incident on the B-24 wreckage.

3. Additional information is not available that would establish a definite relationship between the two engines and the B-24 wreckage (which is approximately six miles from the Mendel Glacier).

4. Please do not hesitate to call upon this office for any assistance we may furnish.

JACK W. SAUNDERS
Colonel, USAF
Deputy Commander

2 Atch

1. Photographs
2. Final Report of Special Incident (dup)