

44-12-5-17

COORDINATION AND FILE COPY

29 SEP 1961

AFIRS-1 / Mr. Nendell / 7475 / 28 Sep 61 / mg

Aircraft Wreckage from AT-7 Nr 41-21079 in Mendel Glacier

**Mr. John M. Davis, Superintendent
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
Three Rivers, California**

Dear Mr. Davis

1. Your letter of 12 September 1961 is acknowledged. The letter from Dr. Donald M. Jonte, concerning positive identification of the "Mendel" wreckage is confusing since the aircraft AT-7 Nr 41-21079, missing since 18 November 1942, was discovered on 24 September 1947. The wreckage was strewn on a 60-degree slope over a wide area and partially buried in the ice of Darwin Glacier. The two engines, (Pratt and Whitney R-985-AN-1) from AT-7 Nr 41-21079 were located buried in the ice of the upper third of Darwin Glacier. This aircraft carried a crew of four, and one of the crew was positively matched to an identification tag recovered. The wreckage was evidently not molested.

2. Correspondence indicates that Mr. William Bond, 1063 Walker Avenue, Oakland, California, and Mr. Niel L. Perkins, High Sierra Ranger Station, California, received letters of commendation in appreciation of their efforts in guiding Air Force personnel to the wreckage on 27 September 1947.

3. A letter from Dr. Jonte to George Walker, Acting Superintendent of the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks on 12 May 1960, inclosed a picture which shows the Mendel Glacier, Mt. Mendel, and the Darwin Glacier. This picture indicates Dr. Jonte is familiar with the two glaciers. Now the AT-7 wreckage from the Darwin Glacier became situated on Mendel Glacier is unknown.

4. It is hoped that this information will assist you in closing your files on these matters.

Sincerely

JAMES F. RISHER, JR.
Colonel, U. S. AIR FORCE
Assistant Executive

MEMO FOR RECORD: This ltr answers a ltr fr the Supt of the Sequoia and Kings Natl Park which relayed info from a Dr. Jonte. This info concerns a piece of AT-7 #41-21079 found in the Mendel Glacier. As indicated in our ltr, something is amiss about the piece being located in the wrong glacier. A possibility of publicity-hunting exists, and an attempt to discourage further participation by our office is intended by the last paragraph.

COORD

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A7623

September 12, 1961

Deputy Inspector General for Safety
Department of the Air Force
Headquarters United States Air Force
Washington 25, D. C.

Attention: Norton Air Force Base, California, AFORS-1

Dear Sir:

This letter will refer to unidentified aircraft wreckage found on Mendel Glacier in Kings Canyon National Park, California, in 1960 and previously reported to you. We understand this file was closed due to insufficient information; however, the letter of Colonel Paul P. Douglas, Jr., USAF, dated 9/28/60, did refer in paragraph 5 to further identifying wreckage.

We have received a letter from the original discoverer, Dr. Donald M. Jente, 47 Post Valley Drive, Grinda, California, from which we quote as follows:

On August 28, 1961, Dr. and Mrs. William Visvant of Norman, Oklahoma, and I visited the glacier to see if any more wreckage had melted out of the ice. We found more pieces of smashed aluminum and one section of fuselage or wing with the following inscription:

Mather Field U S Army A F 7
Air Corps Serial Number 41 - 21079

This is probably the information the Aircraft Identification Section at Norton Air Force Base needs to positively identify the Mendel wreckage. I would be very pleased if you could keep me informed - especially if this serial number helps solve a twenty year old mystery.

As we do not know whether the above-quoted inscriptions will serve Norton Air Force Base as positive identifying data, we forward this information to you for such action as you may desire to take.

Sincerely yours,

John M. Davis
Superintendent