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UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
MARINE TRANSPORT SQUADRON NINE FIFTY-TWO
MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP TWENTY-ONE
FOURTH MARINE AIRCRAFT WING, FLEET MARINE FORCE
c/o FLEET POST OFFICE, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

21 April 1945

STATEMENT OF CAPTAIN ROBERT H. MITCHELL, (016380) U.S. MARINE CORPS RES.

Subject: Accident observed 16 April 1945.

Just after taking off from Agana on a routine instrument flight, I observed a four-engined plane just off the east coast of Guam. This plane was at about six hundred (600) feet, paralleling the coastline, when first observed, and was in a gentle glide.

The plane was observed to continue its glide to the water. Upon impact with the water, the plane skipped once, exploded upon next impact and burned. We proceeded to the scene of the accident immediately.

We spotted what we believed to be one survivor. The fact that there was one survivor was confirmed by an P6F pilot flying there.

We dropped a raft upwind from the survivor. On the next time around, the raft was still closed. We made another pass and the raft was then open. I thought that I saw a man holding to the side of the raft.

We dropped two smoke bombs to mark survivor's position and continued circling at one thousand (1000) feet. When Dumbo arrived at 1430, we departed.

The crash occurred approximately one thousand (1000) yards off shore. The wreckage drifted in toward shore. One open life raft was observed about two hundred (200) yards south of the wreckage. The survivor was about fifty (50) feet south-east of the aircraft. Time of the accident was approximately 1355.

A TRUE COPY:

Joseph W. Jordan
JOSEPH W. JORDAN
Captain, AIC Corps

/s/ Robert H. Mitchell
ROBERT H. MITCHELL

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STATEMENT OF JAMES A. KANE, GUNNER'S MATE 1/C 49TH SEABEES

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Approximately 14:45, 16 April 1945 while on a project on Triangle Point, I noticed a B-29 flying low over the water headed directly into Pago Bay from approximately due east. My first reaction was that it was another plane just flying low - but wondered how a ship of that size would clear the terrain of the island. Aircraft continued to lose altitude and finally made contact with the water without attempting to change its attitude. Aircraft flight path was at 5 degree descent with top of the water. Aircraft burst into flames upon impact. All but one wing tip submerged within two or three minutes. It was hard to determine whether or not anyone was able to escape, from where I was viewing the accident.

/s/ James A. Kane

A TRUE COPY

Joseph W. Jorda
JOSEPH W. JORDA
Captain, Air Corps

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UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
 MARINE TRANSPORT SQUADRON NINE FIFTY-TWO
 MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP TWENTY-ONE
 FOURTH MARINE AIRCRAFT WING, FLEET MARINE FORCE
 c/o FLEET POST OFFICE, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

21 April 1945.

STATEMENT OF FIRST LIEUTENANT IKE A. ROSENBAUM, (023305), U. S. MARINE
CORPS RESERVE

Subject: Accident witnessed 16 April 1945.

We had just taken off from Agana Field on 16 April 1945, when making our down-wind turn and leaving the traffic circle we observed a four-engined aircraft flying very low just off the east end of the island. While we were still watching the plane it hit the water going directly down-wind. It was impossible to tell from our distance if the plane was attempting to ditch or if the glide was broken. After contact with the surface, the plane skipped once and started to burn immediately, breaking up at once. We immediately called Dove Tower and informed them of the crash and proceeded over the scene. Upon circling at an altitude of approximately two hundred (200) feet, I thought I could make out one or more survivors; so on another circle over the scene we dropped one (1) life raft. We continued circling from one thousand (1000) feet and as the debris started to drift towards the shore we dropped two (2) smoke grenades to mark the scene of the crash. After about thirty-five (35) minutes a Dumbo appeared over the scene and circled.

Ike A. Rosenbaum
 IKE A. ROSENBAUM

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AGANA AIR BASE

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24 April 1945

Statement of G. C. Fridzell, AMM 3c 576-14-38.

I was a member of the crew sent out to search for survivors of B-29 crash. Our plane was PBY 5-A 46475 and we searched the area of crash from about 1400 to 1600 - 16th April 1945. I saw no survivors, only one partially inflated raft and a wing tip of the plane sticking out of the water. A smoke bomb was burning in the water when we got there and we dropped two more to direct the Amtracks which arrived on the scene shortly before we left.

The plane had floated in up to the reef while we were circling and all I saw at any time was some wreckage floating around but no survivors.

The wreckage seemed to be self sealing gas tanks, small ones, a few small boards and several oxygen tanks. There was a small oil slick.

/s/ G. C. Fridzell

A TRUE COPY:

Joseph W. Jorda
JOSEPH W. JORDA
Captain, Air Corps

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FIRST MARINE AMPHIBIAN TRUCK COMPANY,
FLEET MARINE FORCE, PACIFIC, IN THE FIELD.

18 April, 1945.

STATEMENT OF FIRST LIEUTENANT ROBERT C. McNAB, Jr., 019523,
U. S. MARINE CORPS RESERVE.

On 16 April, 1945, upon instructions from Headquarters, 3d Marine Division, to investigate a plane crash in the vicinity of the Pago Bay Area, I proceeded with two amphibian trucks to the designated area. Upon arrival at Lates Point I discovered a wing section of a plane sticking up approximately 30 feet and lodged against a reef. This wing section appeared to be the right wing section of a B-29 Bomber. Due to the high surf and the reef it was impossible to get any closer than 30 or 35 feet to this wing section. Debris of all types was floating in the adjacent area to the wreckage. In this debris a white canvas sack was picked up and a set of navigation logs. After circling the area for approximately one hour and a half no bodies or persons were found in the area of the wreckage. At approximately 1630 a PBY patrolling this area flew low overhead indicating that he found nothing and was leaving and I left also. Upon arrival at my camp some four or five Army officers who were investigating the accident were awaiting my report. I turned over all the matter that was picked up at the scene of the wreckage to Captain Truchsell of the Army Air Forces.


ROBERT C. McNAB, Jr.

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SECRET
BY AUTHORITY OF DATE
INITIALS

DATE *22 June 45*

HEADQUARTERS, 157TH AIR TRNG SQ
CENTRAL PACIFIC WING, PACIFIC DIVISION
AIR TRANSPORT COMMAND
APO #466

CLASS/TYPE/INSTR

RESTRICTED

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Aircraft Accident Report

TO: Commanding General, AAF
Winston-Salem 1
North Carolina
ATTN: Chief, Flying Safety

In compliance with AAF Regulation 12-14, dated 20 October 1944 and PACD Letter 12-9 dated 5 April 1945, the attached WD, AAF Form No. 14, Major Aircraft Accident Report, pertaining to B-29 aircraft serial No. 42-94021, with available substantiating documents, is herewith submitted.

FOR THE OCCASIONING OFFICER:

Robert L. Burchett
ROBERT L. BURCHETT
Captain, Air Corps
Adjutant

8 Incls

1. WD, AAF Form No. 14
2. **Accident Report of Aircraft Accident Inves. Officer.**
3. Statement of Captain Robert H. Mitchell
4. Statement of James A. Kane
5. Statement of 1st Lt. Ike A. Rosenbaum
6. Statement of G.C. Friddell
7. Statement of 1st Lt. Robert C. McHab
8. WD, AAF, Form 23

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DECLASSIFIED

140-34354

~~SECRET~~

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF FLYING SAFETY
WASHINGTON

AFAPS-1
BRIEF NO. C-635

BRIEF OF
AIRCRAFT
ACCIDENT

DATE AND TIME

16 April 45 0400Z 23634

PLACE OF ACCIDENT

150 yards off shore, Guam

AIRCRAFT AND STATION

B-29 (42-94021)

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

Complete wreck

PILOT NAME

1st Lt. John D. O'Reilly

PILOT STATION

Mather Field, Calif.

PERSONNEL INVOLVED
AND INJURIES

Pilot; Co-Pilot, 2nd Lt. Jack G. Vawpack; Navigator, 2nd Lt.
Kerry Farrel Stallings, Jr.; Bombardier, 2nd Lt. John Albert
Rausi; Observer, 2nd Lt. Philip Scott Hanson; Radio Operator
Gunner, Sgt. Anthony Joseph Scuffidi; Gunners: Cpl. Stewart
James Reid; Cpl. Walter Merton Rusin; Cpl. Raymond Martin
Stell; Cpl. Bertrand Howard Constantine; N/Sgt Roy V. Dugan;
Sgt. Peter, Cpl. Navarro, all missing.

DESCRIPTION OF
ACCIDENT

Departed Mather Field for Guam, via John Rodgers Field, T. H.
and Kwajalein Island. IFR clearance from Kwajalein to
Guam. Crashed 150 yards off shore, Guam, water depth
unknown. Bodies not recovered after 4 hours search.

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MISSION

Ferry

WEATHER

Clouding 2000 feet scattered. Visibility 10-20 miles.

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SOURCE

MATHER FIELD, CALIF. NR MA 452. 12-18674 (17 Apr 45)