

101 137

| NAME OF PILOT                     |         |       | TYPE OF PLANE |     |    | ACCIDENT NUMBER |     |    |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-------|---------------|-----|----|-----------------|-----|----|
| Grantell Thomas F. J.             |         |       | P-51D         |     |    | 48-1-7-1        |     |    |
| CHARGED TO:                       | OUT     | IN    | CHARGED TO:   | OUT | IN | CHARGED TO:     | OUT | IN |
| Lt Jackson then to<br>N.R. System | 1/28    | 2/18  |               |     |    |                 |     |    |
| May. McCord                       | 2/15    | —     |               |     |    |                 |     |    |
| May. Myers                        | 3-4     | ✓     |               |     |    |                 |     |    |
| May. Ordo                         | 3/26    | ✓     |               |     |    |                 |     |    |
| Capt Howard                       | 4/1     | 4/2 ✓ |               |     |    |                 |     |    |
| Capt Mattingly                    | 4/28    | 4/30  |               |     |    |                 |     |    |
| May. Wilson                       | 9/16    | ✓     |               |     |    |                 |     |    |
| May. Wilson                       | '72     | ✓     |               |     |    |                 |     |    |
| Capt Mattingly                    | 11/30   | ✓     |               |     |    |                 |     |    |
| Ben Newby                         | 5/3/50  | ✓     |               |     |    |                 |     |    |
| Lt. Foye                          | 11/1/50 | ✓     |               |     |    |                 |     |    |
| Col. Saad                         | 4/20    | 20/98 |               |     |    |                 |     |    |

# ROUTING SLIP

2277a

TO:

|           |                                   |      |                  |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|------|------------------|
| 1. OFFICE | <i>Deputy, Life Air Inspector</i> | DATE | <i>20 Feb 48</i> |
| ATTENTION | <i>for Field Operations</i>       |      |                  |
| 2. OFFICE | <i>Langley Air Force Base</i>     | DATE |                  |
| ATTENTION | <i>Hampton, Va.</i>               |      |                  |
| 3. OFFICE |                                   | DATE |                  |
| ATTENTION |                                   |      |                  |

**FOR: FOLLOWING ACTION(S) AS CHECKED**

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> COORDINATION     | <input type="checkbox"/> NOTE AND RETURN | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NECESSARY ACTION | <input type="checkbox"/> RECOMMENDATION  | <input type="checkbox"/> FILE                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SEE OR PHONE ME  | <input type="checkbox"/> APPROVAL        | <input type="checkbox"/> SIGNATURE              |

COMMENT

*2277a*

*copy*

**FROM:**

|            |                      |          |              |
|------------|----------------------|----------|--------------|
| OFFICE     | <i>AFCA 1</i>        | ROOM NO. | <i>3E230</i> |
| INDIVIDUAL | <i>Flying Safety</i> | PHONE    | <i>3270</i>  |

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

TO:



# ROUTING SLIP



|                                       |                       |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. OFFICE<br><b>The Air Inspector</b> | DATE<br><b>21 Jan</b> |
| ATTENTION                             |                       |
| 2. OFFICE                             | DATE                  |
| ATTENTION                             |                       |
| 3. OFFICE                             | DATE                  |
| ATTENTION                             |                       |

FOR: FOLLOWING ACTION(S) AS CHECKED

|                  |                 |             |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| COORDINATION     | NOTE AND RETURN | INFORMATION |
| NECESSARY ACTION | RECOMMENDATION  | FILE        |
| SEE OR PHONE ME  | APPROVAL        | SIGNATURE   |

## COMMENT

1. The attached report has been reviewed and is approved by this office.

2. The recommendation made in paragraph 17 will be accomplished in this office.

## FROM:

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| OFFICE <b>POTAI, Hq USAF, Langley Air Force Base, Hampton, Va.</b> | ROOM NO.          |
| INDIVIDUAL <b>Colonel Clark</b>                                    | PHONE <b>3212</b> |



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REPORT OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATION OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT  
INVOLVING P-51B NO. 44-63869

1. DATE AND TIME OF ACCIDENT: 7 January 1948, 1518 est
2. LOCATION OF ACCIDENT: 5 miles southwest of Franklin, Kentucky
3. AIRCRAFT: P-51B No. 44-63869
4. HOME STATION AND ORGANIZATION: 165th Fighter Squadron, Kentucky ANG,  
Standiford Field, Louisville, Kentucky
5. RESULTS TO AIRCRAFT: Demolished
6. HISTORY OF AIRCRAFT AND ENGINES:

AIRCRAFT

Date of manufacture - 15 December 1944  
Total hours - 16:150, 23 December 1947, EST 9:15 to time of crash  
Date last overhaul - new

ENGINES

Model - V-1650-7  
Number - V-328830  
Total hours - 174:25  
Hours since last overhaul - new

PROPELLER

Model - Hamilton Hydromatic  
Hours since last overhaul - new

7. PILOT, HOME STATION AND ORGANIZATION: Thomas F. Martell Jr., Captain, O-806873,  
123rd Fighter Group, 165th Fighter Squadron,  
Standiford Field, Louisville, Kentucky

8. PILOT HISTORY:

|                     | <u>1st Pilot</u> | <u>Other</u> |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Total hours         | 1608:00          | 577:00       |
| Hours this type     | 67:00            | 00:00        |
| Hours this model    | 67:00            | 00:00        |
| Hours last 90 days  | 42:00            | 00:00        |
| Hours last 30 days  | 14:00            | 00:00        |
| Hours last 24 hours | 2:00             | 00:00        |
| Actual Combat hours | 107:00           | 11:00        |

9. COPILOT HISTORY: Not applicable

10. FLIGHT ENGINEER AND NAVIGATOR NAMES, HOME STATION, ORGANIZATION AND HISTORY:

Not applicable

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11. RESULTS TO CREW: Thomas F. Mantell Jr., Captain - fatal

12. NARRATION OF EVENTS: On the 7th of January, a flight of four P-51's departed Marietta Air Base, Marietta, Georgia, enroute to Standiford Field, Louisville, Kentucky. Captain Mantell was the acting Flight Commander and filed the Form 23 at Marietta for all four aircraft. The flight proceeded according to plan without incident to the vicinity of Godman Field, Kentucky. Captain Mantell was asked by Godman Tower to investigate an unidentified object in the sky to the southwest. Captain Mantell led the flight in that direction and started climbing at full power. At this time the one wingman, Lt. Hammond, broke formation and proceeded to Standiford and landed. At approximately 22,500 feet, the other aircraft turned back due to lack of oxygen. A short while later an observer on the ground noticed an aircraft circling at a high altitude then came diving down, slowly spiraling and evidently under full power. At approximately half way from the originally observed altitude and the ground, the plane was seen to disintegrate and subsequently crash on a farm near Franklin, Kentucky. This aircraft was identified as the one piloted by Captain Mantell who was found in the wreckage.

13. INVESTIGATION DISCLOSED:

- a. The purpose of the flight to Standiford Field, Louisville, Kentucky, was to return the four P-51's to the Air National Guard that were grounded at Marietta for weather a week previous.
- b. Form 23 was completed by Captain Mantell and weather was above defined VFR minimums. (Exhibit 1)
- c. In the vicinity of Godman Field, Kentucky, the flight leader was contacted by the tower operator who requested that he investigate an unidentified object if he had enough fuel. (Exhibits 4 and 5)
- d. Captain Mantell advised Godman tower that he had sufficient fuel remaining and that he would investigate the object as requested. (Exhibits 4 and 5)
- e. Captain Mantell did not advise the other aircraft in his flight of his intention. (Exhibits 4 and 5)
- f. The number 2 man in the flight broke away at this point and returned to Standiford. (Exhibit 3)
- g. Captain Mantell started a sharp spiraling climb to the right which necessitated power settings of 47" M.P. and 2700 RPM for the wingman to stay in position. (Exhibits 4 and 5)
- h. At 14,000 feet, Captain Mantell broke off the spiral and started a straight climb on a heading of approximately 220° at the maximum rate of climb. (Exhibits 4 and 5)

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- i. At 18,000 feet, Lt. Clements, the right wingman, put on his oxygen mask and began breathing oxygen. (Exhibit 4)
- j. Captain Mantell, the flight leader and Lt. Hammond, the left wingman, did not have oxygen or oxygen masks. (Exhibits 4 and 5)
- k. At 18,000 feet, Lt. Clements attempted to pull up close to the flight leader and signal him with hand signals to listen out on Channel B. (Exhibit 4)
- l. Captain Mantell had at no time signaled for a change over to "B" Baker Channel which is customary procedure for the flight leader. (Exhibit 4)
- m. At 20,000 feet, Lt. Clements advised Captain Mantell that their MIA for Standiford had elapsed and suggested that he notify Goddard tower to relay their position to Flight Service to which Captain Mantell replied "Roger." (Exhibit 4)
- n. A few minutes later, Captain Mantell called the flights attention to a city with an airport beside it, which was identified by Lt. Clements as Bowling Green. (Exhibit 4)
- o. At approximately 20,000 feet, Captain Mantell called the flights attention to an object at 1800 B'clock. (Exhibit 4 and 5)
- p. Captain Mantell's transmission was garbled, but Lt. Clements stated he mentioned something about going to 25,000 feet for 10 minutes. (Exhibit 4)
- q. At 22,500 feet, Lt. Clements advised flight leader that he was breaking off to lead the other wingman back to Standiford Field, however, his transmission was not acknowledged by Captain Mantell. (Exhibit 4)
- r. Through the later stages of this climb, Lt. Hammond was signaling that he was having trouble due to the lack of oxygen and requested descending to a lower altitude. (Exhibit 4)
- s. At the time Lt. Clements and Lt. Hammond broke off from the flight, (22,500) Captain Mantell was observed climbing directly into the sun. (Exhibit 4)
- t. From 18,000 feet on, the point at which the high blower engaged, Lt. Clements had to use full power to maintain his position in the formation. (Exhibit 4)
- u. The last radio contact with Captain Mantell was at 20,000 feet and from all appearances he seemed to have the aircraft under perfect control. (Exhibit 4)
- v. Captain Mantell's aircraft was next observed by William C. Mayo, a civilian from Franklin, Kentucky, circling and after about three circles started into a power dive slowly rotating. (Exhibits 6 and 7)

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- w. The aircraft was making a terrific noise, ever increasing as it descended according to the statement of the two witnesses. (Exhibits 6 and 7)
- x. According to the statements of the witnesses, the aircraft exploded half way between where it started the dive and the ground. (Exhibits 6 and 7)
- y. None of the witnesses observed any fire coming from the aircraft during the descent. (Exhibits 6, 7, 8 and 9)
- z. The aircraft crashed at approximately 1520 DST, southwest of Franklin, Kentucky. (Exhibits 6 and 7)
- aa. The aircraft did not explode or burn on impact. (Exhibits 6 and 7)
- bb. Parts of the airplane fuselage, wreckage and glass from the canopy were scattered over an area of 1/4 of a mile. (Exhibit 10)
- cc. Captain Mantell, pilot, was found in the cockpit of the aircraft. (Exhibits 10 and 11)
- dd. The force of the crash snapped the pilot's safety belts.
- ee. The aircraft was not serviced with oxygen at Marietta as none was available at that station. (Exhibit 2)
- ff. Standiford Field did not have oxygen available, however, a bill of lading had been received showing that oxygen was being sent to the 165th Fighter Squadron.
- gg. Statements of other pilots in the flight confirm the fact that Captain Mantell did not have an oxygen mask. (Exhibit 4)

14. CONTRIBUTING CAUSE FACTORS:

- a. The poor judgment displayed by Captain Mantell in that he elected to climb to altitude without oxygen equipment.
- b. The effects of hypoxia rendering Captain Mantell unconscious causing loss of control of the aircraft.

15. COMMENTS:

- a. It is the opinion of the undersigned that the effects of hypoxia on Captain Mantell was the underlying cause of this accident. While no definite altitude can be given as the exact limit of human tolerance to a lack of oxygen, it is a well known fact that rapid lowering of the oxygen saturation of arterial blood, as occurred in the rapid ascent of Captain Mantell, will produce symptoms of acute hypoxia in a very short time. A publication

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contend that it is possible to remain conscious for a few minutes at 25,000 feet but collapse occurs very rapidly. It is reasonable to assume that Captain Mantell was not aware of the symptoms of anoxia in that his high altitude flying experience was very limited. Prior to his separation from the service and affiliation with the Air National Guard, Captain Mantell was assigned to Troop Carrier Command and according to fellow officers had no occasion to participate in high altitude flights.

- b. At the time Lt. Clements and Lt. Hammond, who incidentally, had been aware of anoxia symptoms for some time, broke away from the lead ship, they estimated that their altitude was 22,500 feet. The range between 15,000 and 20,000 feet is referred to as the disturbance stage and occasionally there are no subjective sensations up to the time of unconsciousness. The critical stage is between 20,000 and 25,000 feet at which altitude consciousness can be lost rapidly, depending on the physical condition of the individual.

It is believed that Captain Mantell was rendered unconscious from anoxia and the uncontrolled aircraft started a slow spiral culminating into a dive which was precipitated by the high power settings and torque. Consequently, the aircraft with its engine producing full power rapidly exceeded its design limitation as was evidenced from the photos, disposition of the wreckage, and later supplemented by civilians statements to the effect that the aircraft disintegrated approximately half way from its initial point of dive to the ground.

- c. Assuming that Captain Mantell was rendered unconscious, it is not likely that he would have had sufficient time to recover and abandon the aircraft before it crashed.
- d. It is the opinion of the undersigned that all fighter aircraft should be serviced with oxygen before each flight and that it be compulsory that the pilot have an oxygen mask in his possession.

The above would preclude the possibility of a pilot taking any unnecessary chances by flying at altitude without the proper oxygen equipment.

#### 16. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a. This accident be publicized through the medium of Flying Safety publication "Crash and Consequence."

#### 17. STATEMENT OF REBUTTAL:

- a. Inasmuch as the pilot was killed in the accident, it was impossible to obtain a statement of rebuttal regarding pilot error.

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ROBERT J. D. JOHNSON  
Major, USAF



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## REPORT OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATION OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVOLVING P-51D NO. 44-63869

1. DATE AND TIME OF ACCIDENT: 7 January 1948, 1518 CST
2. LOCATION OF ACCIDENT: 5 miles southwest of Franklin, Kentucky
3. AIRCRAFT: P-51D No. 44-63869
4. HOME STATION AND ORGANIZATION: 165th Fighter Squadron, Kentucky ANG,  
Staniford Field, Louisville, Kentucky
5. RESULTS TO AIRCRAFT: Dismantled
6. HISTORY OF AIRCRAFT AND ENGINE:

### AIRCRAFT

Date of manufacture - 15 December 1944  
Total hours - 10,150, 23 December 1947, 087 9:35 to time of crash  
Date last overhaul - new

### ENGINE

Model - P-1090-7  
Number - V-388230  
Total hours - 17,412  
Hours since last overhaul - new

### PROPELLER

Model - Hamilton Hydromatic  
Hours since last overhaul - new

7. PILOT, HOME STATION AND ORGANIZATION: Thomas F. Marshall Sr., Captain, #206473,  
123rd Fighter Group, 165th Fighter Squadron,  
Staniford Field, Louisville, Kentucky

### 8. PILOT HISTORY

|                     | <u>1st Pilot</u> | <u>Other</u> |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Total hours         | 1608:09          | 597:00       |
| Hours this type     | 67:00            | 00:00        |
| Hours this model    | 67:00            | 00:00        |
| Hours last 90 days  | 41:00            | 00:00        |
| Hours last 30 days  | 16:00            | 00:00        |
| Hours last 24 hours | 2:00             | 00:00        |
| Actual Combat hours | 107:00           | 00:00        |

### 9. COPILOT HISTORY: Not applicable

10. FLIGHT ENGINEER AND NAVIGATOR NAME, HOME STATION, ORGANIZATION AND HISTORY:  
Not applicable

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11. RESULTS TO CAPTAIN Thomas W. Mantell Sr., Captain - total

12. NARRATION OF EVENTS: On the 7th of January, a flight of four P-51's departed Marietta Air Base, Marietta, Georgia, enroute to Standiford Field, Louisville, Kentucky. Captain Mantell was the acting Flight Commander and filed the Form 23 at Marietta for all four aircraft. The flight proceeded according to plan without incident to the vicinity of Godman Field, Kentucky. Captain Mantell was asked by Godman Tower to investigate an unidentified object in the sky to the southwest. Captain Mantell led the flight in that direction and started climbing at full power. At this time the one wingman, Lt. Hammond, broke formation and proceeded to Standiford and landed. At approximately 22,500 feet, the other aircraft turned back due to lack of oxygen. A short while later an observer on the ground noticed an aircraft circling at a high altitude then saw diving down, slowly spiralling and evidently under full power. At approximately half way from the originally observed altitude and the ground, the plane was seen to disintegrate and subsequently crash on a farm near Franklin, Kentucky. This aircraft was identified as the one piloted by Captain Mantell who was found in the wreckage.

### 13. INVESTIGATION DISCLOSED:

- a. The purpose of the flight to Standiford Field, Louisville, Kentucky, was to return the four P-51's to the Air National Guard that were grounded at Marietta for weather a week previous.
- b. Form 23 was completed by Captain Mantell and weather was above defined VFR minimums. (Exhibit 1)
- c. In the vicinity of Godman Field, Kentucky, the flight leader was contacted by the tower operator who requested that he investigate an unidentified object if he had enough fuel. (Exhibits 4 and 5)
- d. Captain Mantell advised Godman tower that he had sufficient fuel remaining and that he would investigate the object as requested. (Exhibits 4 and 5)
- e. Captain Mantell did not advise the other aircraft in his flight of his intentions. (Exhibits 4 and 5)
- f. The number 2 man in the flight broke away at this point and returned to Standiford. (Exhibit 3)
- g. Captain Mantell started a sharp spiraling climb to the right which necessitated power settings of 27" H.P. and 2700 RPM for the wingman to stay in position. (Exhibits 4 and 5)
- h. At 12,000 feet, Captain Mantell broke off the spiral and started a straight climb on a heading of approximately 290° at the maximum rate of climb. (Exhibits 4 and 5)

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- i. At 16,000 feet, Lt. Clements, the right wingman, put on his oxygen mask and began breathing oxygen. (Exhibit 4)
- j. Captain Martell, the flight leader and Lt. Hammond, the left wingman, did not have oxygen or oxygen masks. (Exhibits 4 and 5)
- k. At 18,000 feet, Lt. Clements attempted to pull up close to the flight leader and signal him with hand signals to listen out on Channel 8. (Exhibit 4)
- l. Captain Martell had at no time signalled for a change over to "P" Baker Channel which is customary procedure for the flight leader. (Exhibit 4)
- m. At 20,000 feet, Lt. Clements advised Captain Martell that their ETA for Standiford had elapsed and suggested that he notify Oshes lower to relay their position to Flight Service to which Captain Martell replied "Roger." (Exhibit 4)
- n. A few minutes later, Captain Martell called the flight attention to a city with an airport beside it, which was identified by Lt. Clements as Bowling Green. (Exhibit 4)
- o. At approximately 20,000 feet, Captain Martell called the flight attention to an object at 1200 degrees. (Exhibit 4 and 5)
- p. Captain Martell's transmission was garbled, but Lt. Clements stated he mentioned something about going to 25,000 feet for 10 minutes. (Exhibit 4)
- q. At 22,500 feet, Lt. Clements advised flight leader that he was breaking off to lead the other wingman back to Standiford Field, however, his transmission was not acknowledged by Captain Martell. (Exhibit 4)
- r. Through the later stages of this climb, Lt. Hammond was signalling that he was having trouble due to the lack of oxygen and requested descending to a lower altitude. (Exhibit 4)
- s. At the time Lt. Clements and Lt. Hammond broke off from the flight (22,500) Captain Martell was observed climbing directly into the sun. (Exhibit 4)
- t. From 18,000 feet on, the point at which the high blower engaged, Lt. Clements had to use full power to maintain his position in the formation. (Exhibit 4)
- u. The last radio contact with Captain Martell was at 30,000 feet and from all appearances he seemed to have the aircraft under perfect control. (Exhibit 4)
- v. Captain Martell's aircraft was next observed by William B. Innes, a civilian from Franklin, Kentucky, circling and after about three circles started into a power dive slowly rotating. (Exhibits 6 and 7)

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20. The aircraft was making a terrific noise, ever increasing as it descended according to the statements of the two witnesses. (Exhibits 6 and 7)
21. According to the statements of the witnesses, the aircraft exploded half way between where it started the dive and the ground. (Exhibits 6 and 7)
22. None of the witnesses observed any fire coming from the aircraft during the descent. (Exhibits 4, 7, 8 and 9)
23. The aircraft crashed at approximately 1538 GMT, southeast of Trondheim, Norway. (Exhibits 6 and 7)
24. The aircraft did not explode or burn on impact. (Exhibits 4 and 7)
25. Parts of the aircraft fuselage, wreckage and glass from the cockpit were scattered over an area of 1/2 of a mile. (Exhibits 10 and 11)
26. Captain Marshall, pilot, was found in the cockpit of the aircraft. (Exhibits 10 and 11)
27. The cause of the crash stopped the pilot's safety belt.
28. The aircraft was not serviced with oxygen at Kristianstad as none was available at that station. (Exhibit 2)
29. Sandness Field did not have oxygen available, however, a bill of lading had been received showing that oxygen was being sent to the 1/5th Fighter Squadron.
30. Statements of other pilots in the flight confirm the fact that Captain Marshall did not have an oxygen mask. (Exhibit 4)

14. CONTRIBUTING CAUSE FACTORS

- a. The poor judgment displayed by Captain Marshall in that he elected to climb to altitude without oxygen equipment.
- b. The effects of hypoxia rendering Captain Marshall unconscious causing loss of control of the aircraft.

15. CONCLUSIONS

- a. It is the opinion of the undersigned that the effects of hypoxia on Captain Marshall was the underlying cause of this accident. While no definite altitude can be given as the exact limit of human behavior to a lack of oxygen, it is a well known fact that only a small amount of the oxygen contained in a normal breath, as inhaled in the rapid attack of Captain Marshall, will produce symptoms of acute hypoxia in a very short time. At publication

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concluded that it is possible to remain conscious for a few minutes at 25,000 feet but collapse occurs very rapidly. It is reasonable to assume that Captain Marshall was not aware of the symptoms of anemia in that his high altitude flying experience was very limited. Prior to his separation from the service and affiliation with the Air National Guard, Captain Marshall was assigned to Troop Carrier Command and according to fellow officers had no occasion to participate in high altitude flights.

- b. At the time Lt. Clements and Lt. Kinnard, who incidentally, had been aware of anemia symptoms for some time, broke away from the lead ship, they estimated that their altitude was 25,000 feet. The range between 15,000 and 20,000 feet is referred to as the disturbance stage and occasionally there are no subjective sensations up to the time of unconsciousness. The critical stage is between 20,000 and 25,000 feet at which altitude consciousness can be lost rapidly, depending on the physical condition of the individual.

It is believed that Captain Marshall was rendered unconscious from anemia and the uncontrolled aircraft started a slow spiral culminating into a dive which was precipitated by the high power settings and torque. Consequently, the aircraft with its engine producing full power rapidly exceeded its design limitations as was evidenced from the photos, disposition of the wreckage, and later supplemented by civilian statements to the effect that the aircraft disintegrated approximately half way from its initial point of dive to the ground.

- c. Assuming that Captain Marshall was rendered unconscious, it is not likely that he would have had sufficient time to recover and abandon the aircraft before it crashed.
- d. It is the opinion of the undersigned that all fighter aircraft should be serviced with oxygen before each flight and that it be compulsory that the pilot have an oxygen mask in his possession.

The above would preclude the possibility of a pilot taking any unnecessary chances by flying at altitude without the proper oxygen equipment.

### 16. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a. This accident be published through the medium of Flying Safety publication "Crash and Consequences."

### 17. STATEMENT OF KINSHIP:

- a. Inasmuch as the pilot was killed in the incident, it was impossible to obtain a statement of rebuttal regarding pilot errors.

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ROBERT J. D. JOHNSON  
Major, USAF



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**XXXXXXXX**

1. Clearance Form 23
2. Statement of Major Deady
3. Statement of 1st Lt. Robert E. Sandvick
4. Statement of 1st Lt. Albert W. Clements
5. Statement of Mrs. Gerrie A. Phillips
6. Statement of Glen T. Hayes
7. Statement of William J. Phillips
8. Statement of William G. Hayes
9. Statement of Harry W. Decker
10. Sketch of scene of accident

~~11. [REDACTED]~~



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**EXHIBITS**

1. Clearance Form 23
2. Statement of Major Denby
3. Statement of 1st Lt. Robert K. Hendricks
4. Statement of 1st Lt. Albert W. Clements
5. Statement of Mrs. Carrie A. Phillips
6. Statement of Glen T. Hayes
7. Statement of William J. Phillips
8. Statement of William G. Hayes
9. Statement of Harry W. Becker
10. Sketch of scene of accident
11. [Illegible]

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OPERATIONS OFFICE  
 ADDRESS **ARIETTA ARMY AIR FIELD**  
**ARIETTA, GEORGIA**

DATE  
**7 Jan 1948**

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|  |                     |                            |                                      |                                    |
|--|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| PILOT'S NAME<br><b>B.T.F. Mantell Jr. 0-806873</b>   | RANK<br><b>Capt</b> | HOME STATION<br><b>DXL</b> | ORGANIZATION<br><b>165th Ftr Sq.</b> | AIRCRAFT NUMBER<br><b>14-63869</b> |
| NAME, INITIALS, RANK, HOME STATION OF OTHER OCCUPANTS  |                     |                            |                                      |                                    |
| <b>R.K. Hendricks 1st. Lt. 0-2063831</b>   |                     | <b>73336</b>               |                                      |                                    |
| <b>A.W. Clements 1st. Lt. 0-732166</b>   |                     | <b>73800</b>               |                                      |                                    |
| <b>B.A. Hammond 2nd. Lt. 0-2085976</b>   |                     | <b>73757</b>               |                                      |                                    |
| This aircraft is equipped with instruments and flashlight for IPR and Night flights<br>DATE <b>1-48</b> Pilots Int. <b>TFM</b><br>This aircraft is identical with that shown on Form "F" filed at <b>DXL</b><br>Pilots initials <b>TFM</b> |                     |                            |                                      |                                    |

LIST ADDITIONAL PASSENGERS ON SEPARATE SHEET

|  |                                       |   |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| <b>C WEATHER DATA</b>  |                                       | EXISTING LOCAL  | ALTIMETER SETTINGS              |
| EXISTING ROUTE   |                                       |   | LOCAL                           |
| DESTINATION (LATEST)   | TIME                                  | <b>A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY</b><br><b>Edwin A. Wood</b><br><b>EDWIN A. WOOD</b><br><b>Capt., USAF</b><br><b>Operations Officer</b> | DESTINATION                     |
| ALTERNATE (LATEST)   | TIME                                  |   | ALTERNATE                       |
| FORECASTS  | (ESTIMATED FLIGHT TIME IN HOURS)      |   | RESET ALTIMETER BEFORE APPROACH |
| ROUTE  |                                       |   |                                 |
| DESTINATION  |                                       |   |                                 |
| I have been adequately briefed on the current IX and forecast IX effecting my flight and I understand the IX situation. (S) Thomas F. Mantell Jr.<br><b>PILOTS SIGNATURE</b> |                                       |   |                                 |
| WINDS ALOFT  | GIVE ALT. DIR. VEL. AS PILOT REQUESTS |   |                                 |
| AAP FORM 85A REQUIRED  | <input type="checkbox"/> NOT REQUIRED | FORECASTER  | VOID <b>14200</b> TIME          |

|  |  |   |  |   |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| <b>FLIGHT PLAN</b> (PILOT COMPLETES) RADIO CALLS <b>NG 3869</b>        |  | TYPE OF AIRCRAFT <b>4 P51</b>                                     | PILOT (LAST NAME ONLY) <b>Mantell</b>              | POINT OF DEPARTURE <b>ARIETTA A/F</b>   |
| 1 ALT <b>VFR</b>   | 2 ALT                                  | 3 ALT   | 4 ALT  |   |
| CFR ROUTE <b>Drot</b>  | CFR ROUTE                              | CFR ROUTE   | CFR ROUTE  |   |
| IFR TO <b>DXL</b>  | IFR TO                                 | IFR TO  | IFR TO   |   |
| AIRPORT OF FIRST INTENDED LANDING <b>DXL</b>                           | TRUE AIR SPEED <b>300</b>              | TRANSMITTING FREQUENCIES <b>126.18 "B" "A"</b>                    |  | RECEIVER ONLY <input type="checkbox"/> NO RADIO <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| PROPOSED TAKE OFF TIME <b>1330 C</b>                                   | EST. TIME ENROUTE <b>1 Hr. 10 Min.</b> | ALTERNATE AIRPORT   | HOURS OF FUEL <b>3 Plus</b>                        | INSTRUMENT RATING <b>W</b>  |
| REMARKS: SHOW FIXES WHICH WILL BE REPORTED WHILE ON INSTRUMENT FLIGHT. |  |   |  |   |
| TOWER FREQUENCY <b>118.396 KC</b> and <b>118.1 Channel 1</b>           |  |   | PILOT'S SIGNATURE <b>(S) Thomas F. Mantell Jr.</b> |   |
| DESTINATION <b>B" KC</b>   | ALTERNATE <b>KC</b>                    | RECEIVED <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO | DESTINATION <b>310</b>                             | RELEASE DEST. TO ALTERNATE <input type="checkbox"/> COMMAND PILOT <input type="checkbox"/> SENIOR PILOT <input type="checkbox"/> CONTRACT PILOT OF CARGO AIRCRAFT <input type="checkbox"/> PILOT <input type="checkbox"/> |

|   |                                    |              |   |
|---|------------------------------------|--------------|---|
| <b>E FLIGHT CLEARANCE AUTHORIZATION</b>                               |                                    |              |   |
| SUBMITTED TO <b>AFS</b>   | TIME <b>1420</b>                   | BY <b>RC</b> | OPERATIONS IDENTIFICATION NO.           |
| TIME APPROVAL RECEIVED  | CONTROL INSTRUCTIONS RECEIVED      |              | <b>ROBERT C. UL, COL AF, GS. AFS/XZ</b> |
| INSTRUCTIONS AND APPROVAL TRANSMITTED TO PILOT OR TOWER BY: <b>FM</b> | ACTUAL TAKE-OFF TIME <b>1442 E</b> |              | CLEARANCE OFFICER                       |

|  |               |                 |             |                         |  |  |  |
|--|---------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>F PILOT COMPLETE FIRST LINE BELOW PRESENT TO LINE CREWMAN BEFORE TAKE-OFF</b> |               |                 |             | <b>DEPARTURE RECORD</b> |  | LINE CREWMAN WILL COMPLETE SECOND LINE AND DELIVER TO OPERATIONS OFFICE. |  |
| PILOT (LAST NAME ONLY)   | AIRCRAFT TYPE | AIRCRAFT NUMBER | ACTUAL FUEL | GROSS WEIGHT            |  |  |  |

**RESTRICTED**

8 January 1948

P-51 NO. 44-63869

Aircraft were not serviced with oxygen as none was available at this station.

Pilots of aircraft did not request oxygen on checking in with line chief or operations.

Subject aircraft was fully serviced with 100/130 octane fuel - right, left and fuselage tanks were serviced. Oil was checked on all aircraft and those serviced requiring same.

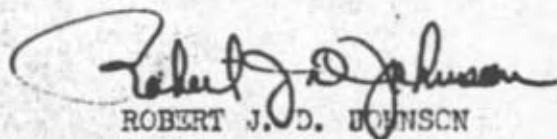
Aircraft arrived this station on 29th December 1947, service was accomplished this date.

Aircraft were preflighted on 6th January 1948 by alert crew. Same were dated and preflighted by crew brought from Standiford Field on date of departure - 7th January 1948.

No mechanical trouble was reported on any of the aircraft.

s/Bernard M. Durey  
Major, AC (NG)

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:



ROBERT J. D. JOHNSON  
Major, USAF

**RESTRICTED**



HEADQUARTERS, 123RD FIGHTER GROUP (ANG)  
Standiford Field  
P. O. Box 1167  
Louisville, Kentucky

A flight of four P-51 departed Mablett Georgia at 1342 G direct to Standiford field Louisville Kentucky. Capt. Thomas Mantell was in the lead ship as flight leader.

The flight was off course slightly to the left and therefore came over Godman Field on a course of about 45degrees. I, Lt. Robert K Hendricks, flying in the number two position was on channel C as we had been the entire trip, when I noticed Capt. Mantell was talking so I went over to channel B.

The only part of the conversation between Capt. Mantell and Godman Field that I heard was as follows, "we would like for you to take a look at it, come over the field on a heading of 330degrees and we will try to guide you." Capt. Mantell answered "Roger, I'll give you a call when I identify it".

Upon hearing this I requested permission to leave the flight to return to Standiford Field, the request was granted by Capt. Mantell. I left the flight at approx. 14400 and landed at Standiford at 15010.

The above statements are true and correct to the best of my knowledge

*Robert K Hendricks*  
ROBERT K HENDRICKS  
1st Lt. KY.N.G.

RESTRICTED

RES

January 2, 1948  
Standiford Field  
Louisville, Kentucky

The flight of four P-51s was begun from Marietta Army Airbase, Marietta, Georgia. Each pilot started his engine about 1355 CST, and immediately switched his radio to B Baker channel. Capt. Mantell, who was to lead the flight, contacted the tower and obtained take-off instructions and the flight taxied out, led by Capt. Mantell, Lt. Hondricks his wingman, as the element wingman. The first two ships were off the ground at about 1355, followed by the second two a minute two a minute later. Following the join-up in regular four ship formation, the flight proceeded on course towards Louisville, climbing up to 8000' and leveling off at this altitude. Capt. Mantell signaled for a channel switch to #3 C Charlie channel.

The flight proceeded without incident until over the Dale Hollow Reservoir at which point Capt. Mantell signaled for intrail formation and proceeded to drop down and make two 360° degree orbits over the reservoir and then climbed back up to 8000' and proceeded on course again. The flight again proceeded without further incident to a point about five miles North of Godman Field, Godman Field was slightly off course and the flight drifted off to the right making contact with the Ohio River just north of Godman Field. At this point 1455 Lt. Hondricks, #2 man, broke away from the formation and headed towards Standiford Field. Capt. Mantell immediately after this began a rather sharp spiraling climb to the right at rather high power settings, necessitating a power setting of 47" MP and 2700 RPM to maintain position in the formation with him. He continued spiraling at about 14,000' where he broke off the spiral and headed on a south-westerly heading of a approximately 230°, still climbing at the maximum rate of 180 IAS. At about 16,000' I put on my oxygen mask and began taking oxygen because it became apparent that Capt. Mantell was heading for much higher altitudes even though it was known before hand that he did not have oxygen equipment and neither did the element wingman Lt. Hammond. The flight continued on this south-westerly course and at about 18,000' I attempted to pull up fairly close to the flight leader and try to signal him with hand motions and to contact him on B Baker channel asking where the flight was headed. Capt. Mantell had at no time signaled for a change over to B Baker channel which is always customary from the flight leader, either visual signal or on the radio.

In one of my transmissions I notified Capt. Mantell that we were considerably over our KTA for Standiford Field and suggested that he notify Godman Field to relay our position to Flight Service, to which he replied "Roger". However, I failed to hear Capt. Mantell contact Godman Field on this. In the next few minutes I heard Capt. Mantell say "Look, there's a town down there with an airport beside it", and from previous flying in this area I recognized it to be the town of Bowling Green with it's airport to the south east, and at this point I noted that we were at 20,000' and still climbing. I called Capt. Mantell and notified that this was Bowling Green and again asked him what we were looking for.

SECRET



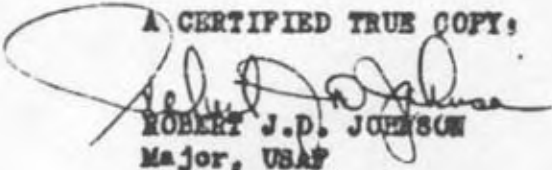
He then replied "Look, there it is out ther at 1200 O'clock", and I was able to discern a bright appearing object, very small, and so faraway as to be unable to identify it as to size, shape, color, but it was definitely something which could be seen. It's position was slightly lower and to the left of the sun. This was at approximately 1515. I called Capt. Mantell and told him I could see the object but suggested that since we did not seem to be making a gain on the object, that it would be better if we leveled off and tried to pick up some speed and possibly get under the object. His transmissions were garbled but he mentioned something about going to 25,000 feet 10 minutes and then if we were unable to make any further progress towards the object, we could drop down.

From the time that the high blower kicked in at about 18,000' on up even though I was using these maximum power settings. At about 22,500' realizing that it was too high to maintain without oxygen, I broke off the flight out of formation and Capt. Mantell disappeared, still climbing almost directly into the sun. I called him and informed him that we were breaking off the flight and returning to Standiford Field, but he did not acknowledge. Through the later stages of this climb Lt. Hammond was signaling that he was having trouble because of his lack of oxygen and wished to go down to a lower altitude. From the time we broke off from the formation we began a rather sharp descent back on course to Standiford Field, about 40° and finally established contact with Godman Tower giving them a position report and our destination, and asking them if they would try to contact Capt. Mantell and inform him that we were returning, in as much as he failed to acknowledge our previous message.

The last contact by radio which we had with Capt. Mantell was when he said he could see the object at 1200 O'clock which was from 20,000', and when last seen he seemed to have the airplane under perfect control and still climbing towards the object. I relayed my thoughts to Godman tower as to what we had seen and proceeded with Lt. Hammond on my wing to Standiford Field, landing without further incident at approximately 1540. As near as I can recall, the last time we saw Capt. Mantell was approximately 1520. At no time did I observe Capt. Mantell to be in trouble and not until the later stages of the flight, prior to our breaking off of formation, did I realize what the object of this high rate of climb and unusual heading away from our ultimate destination was. By the time that I switched to B Baker channel, after we started climbing, we were apparently out of range of the Godman tower. In conjunction with the last time when we left Capt. Mantell I would judge our position to be about 40 miles northwest of Bowling Green.

/s/ Albert W. Clements  
ALBERT W. CLEMENTS  
1st Lt AC Ky ANG

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

  
ROBERT J. D. JOHNSON  
Major, USAF

RESTRICTED

AFFIDAVIT

7 January 1948  
8 miles South West of  
Franklin, Kentucky on  
W. A. Phillips' Farm

I, Mrs. Carey Phillips was sitting in my front room when I heard one explosion, ran to my front window and saw an airplane crash into my left front yard, about two-hundred and fifty yards from my home. The airplane did not burn and did not explode after it hit the ground.

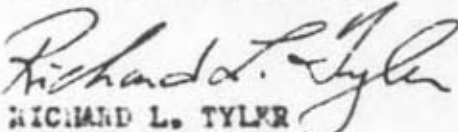
In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal at my home on Route 23, Lake Spring Road, Franklin, Kentucky this 7th day of January 1948.

/s/ Mrs. Carrie A. Phillips

Sworn to and subscribed before me  
this 7th day of January 1948.

/s/ Richard L. Tyler  
RICHARD L. TYLER  
Captain Ky ANG  
Summary Court Officer.

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

  
RICHARD L. TYLER  
Captain Ky ANG

AFFIDAVIT

RESTRICTED



AFFIDAVIT

January 7, 1948  
Franklin, Kentucky

I, Olen T. Hayes of Route #3, Simpson County, Lake Spring Road, Franklin, Kentucky do state that on 7 January 1948 at approximately three-fifteen P.M. I heard an airplane overhead making a funny noise as if he were diving down, and pulling up, but it wasn't, it was just circling. After about three circles the airplane started into a power dive slowly rotating. The plane was so high I could hardly see it when it started down. It started to make a terrific noise, ever increasing, as it descended. It exploded half way between where it started the dive and the ground. No fire was seen. It hit or crashed at three-twenty P.M. Central. It didn't explode when it hit the ground and did not burn.

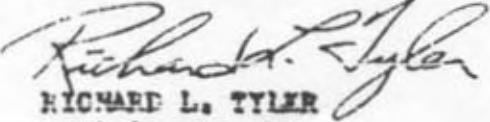
In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal at my home on Route #3, Lake Spring Road, Franklin, Kentucky this 7th day of January 1948.

/s/ Olen T. Hayes  
Route #3, Lake Spring Road  
Franklin, Kentucky

Sworn to and subscribed before me  
this 7th day of January 1948.

/s/ Richard L. Tyler  
RICHARD L. TYLER  
Captain Ky ANG  
Summary Court Officer.

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

  
RICHARD L. TYLER  
Captain Ky ANG

AFFIDAVIT

RECORDED

AFFIDAVIT

8 January 1948  
Franklin, Kentucky

I, William J. Phillips do hereby state that none of my buildings or appurtenances were damaged in any way by crash of aircraft piloted by Captain Thomas F. Mantell Jr, Kentucky Air National Guard when it crashed in my field one hundred and fifty yards to the left of my home.

/s/ William J. Phillips

WITNESSES: I.

/s/ Douglas J. McGill

1080 Howland Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky

II.

/s/ Richard L. Tyler

132 Fortress Street, Louisville, Kentucky

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:



ROBERT R. RANKIN  
Captain, USAF

RESTRICTED



AFFIDAVIT

January 7, 1948  
Franklin, Kentucky

I, William C. Mayes of Route #3, Lake Spring Road, Franklin, Kentucky, Simpson County do state that on 7 January 1948 at approximately three-fifteen P.M. I heard an airplane overhead making a funny noise as if he were diving down, and pulling up, but it wasn't, it was just circling. After about three circles the airplane started into a power dive slowly rotating. The plane was so high I could hardly see it when it started down. It started to make a terrific noise, ever increasing, as it descended. It exploded half way between where it started the dive and the ground. No fire was seen. It hit or crashed at three-twenty P.M., Central. It didn't explode when it hit the ground and did not burn.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal at my home on Route #3, Lake Spring Road, Franklin, Kentucky this 7th day of January 1948.

/s/ William C. Mayes  
Route #3, Lake Spring Road  
Franklin, Kentucky

Sworn to and subscribed before me  
this 7th day of January 1948.

/s/ Richard L. Tyler  
RICHARD L. TYLER  
Captain Ky ABO  
Summary Court Officer.

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY.

*Richard L. Tyler*  
RICHARD L. TYLER  
Captain Ky ABO

AFFIDAVIT

RESTRICTED

AFFIDAVIT

7 January 1968  
Franklin, Kentucky

I, Harry W. Becker, Coroner of Simpson County, Franklin, Kentucky upon examining the dead body of Captain Thomas F. Mantell Jr. do state that the shattered watch of Captain Mantell stopped at 3:18 P.M. Central, which I fix as the time of death of Captain Mantell.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal at Franklin, Kentucky this 7th day of January 1968.

/s/ Harry W. Becker  
Coroner, Simpson County,  
Kentucky.

Sworn to and subscribed before me  
this 7th day of January 1968.

/s/ Richard L. Tyler  
RICHARD L. TYLER  
Captain Ky ANG  
Summary Court Officer

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

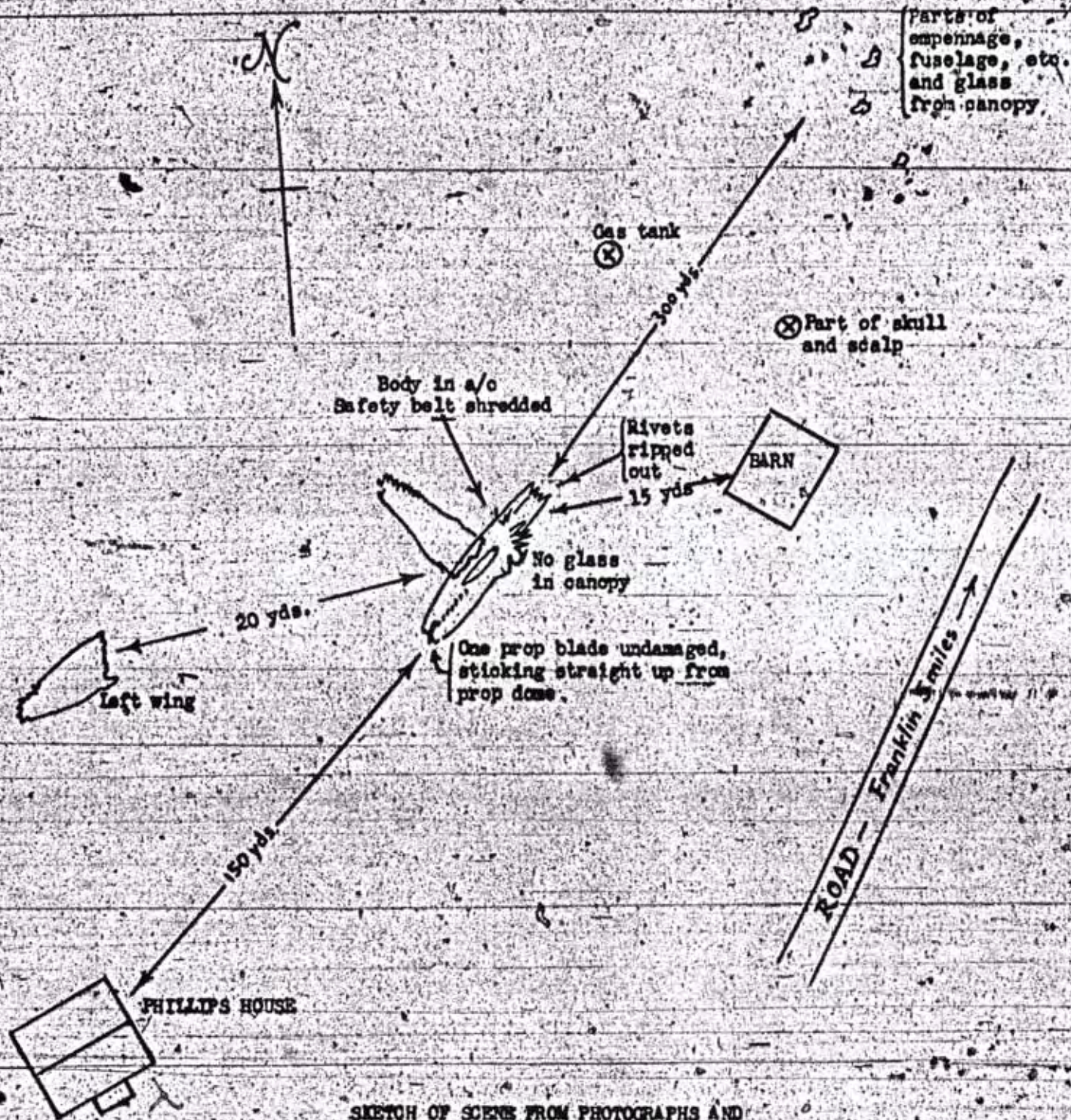
*Richard L. Tyler*

RICHARD L. TYLER  
Captain Ky ANG

AFFIDAVIT

RESTRICTED





SKETCH OF SCENE FROM PHOTOGRAPHS AND DESCRIPTION OF OFFICER AT SCENE



ARMY AIR FORCES

NRV

**REPORT OF MAJOR ACCIDENT**

Use this form in accordance with AAF Reg. 62-11 and "Aircraft Accident Investigator's Handbook" issued by Office of Flying Safety, Headquarters, AAF.

Fill in all spaces except where otherwise indicated.

If additional space is needed, use additional sheet(s) and identify by proper section letter and subsection number.

|                                     |                             |      |                                 |                       |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| FIELD OFFICE—DO NOT FILL THIS SPACE | PRELIMINARY REPORT RECEIVED | 1-8  | TYPE, MODEL AND SERIES<br>P-51D | ACCOUNT NO. 100-1-9-1 |
|                                     | FORM 14 RECEIVED            | 1/26 |                                 |                       |
|                                     | EVALUATED BY                | 2-9  |                                 |                       |
|                                     | VERIFIED BY                 | 2-17 |                                 |                       |
|                                     | CHECKED BY                  |      |                                 |                       |
| CODED BY                            | UP                          | 2-17 | NO. AIRCRAFT INVOLVED           |                       |

**Section A—GENERAL INFORMATION** 32213 3278-8

1. PLACE OF ACCIDENT—State, County, Nearest Town, Distance and Direction from Same. **Kentucky, Simpson, Franklin, 3.5 miles SW** Nearest Army Airfield, Distance and Direction from Base. **Godman Field, 90 miles SSW**

2. WAS COLLISION WITH OTHER AIRCRAFT?  Yes  No

AF No. OF AIRCRAFT INVOLVED (File separate Form 14 for each aircraft) **44-63869** DATE **7 Jan 48** HOUR AND TIME ZONE **1518 CST** DAY  NIGHT

**Section B—AIRCRAFT**

1. AIRCRAFT NO. **44-63869** 2. TYPE MODEL SERIES **P 51 D** 3. HOME STATION **Standiford Field, Louisville, Ky.**

4. AIR FORCE OR COMMAND **11th ANF** SUBCOMMAND **32** WING **55th** GROUP NO. AND TYPE **123rd Ftr Gp (NG)** SQUADRON **165th**

5. DATE OF MANUFACTURE **15 Dec 44** TOTAL HOURS **178:50** DATE LAST OVERHAUL **none** OVERHAULING DEPOT OR SUB-DEPOT **none** HOURS SINCE OVERHAUL **none**

6. Attach detailed statement of tech orders having direct bearing on this accident which have not been complied with. Describe orders and give reasons for non-compliance.

**Section C—OPERATOR (Person at controls at time of accident)**

1. LAST NAME **MANTELL** FIRST NAME **THOMAS** MIDDLE INITIAL **F. JR.** GRADE **Captain** BRANCH **KYANG** ASN **0-806873** SEX **M** AGE **25**

2. ATTACHED STATION **526** AF OR COMMAND **ANF** SUBCOMMAND **32** WING **55th** GROUP NO. AND TYPE **123rd Ftr Gp** SQUADRON **165th**

3. ASSIGNED STATION **Standiford Field, Ky** AF OR COMMAND **11th ANF** SUBCOMMAND **52** WING **55th** GROUP NO. AND TYPE **123rd Ftr Gp** SQUADRON **165th**

4. AERONAUTICAL RATING?  YES  NO

PRESERT RATING **Pilot** DATE RECEIVED **6-30-45** 5. NORMAL DUTY STATUS **Pilot**

**Section D—OPERATOR'S FLYING EXPERIENCE (Including civilian)**

| FLYING TIME            | 1st PILOT OR SOLO STUDENT | OTHER PILOT OR OTHER STUDENT | 10. AAF SCHOOLS PREVIOUSLY ATTENDED AND DATES                  |
|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 1. TOTAL HOURS         | 1608:00                   | 1259:00                      | A/C Training—Marianna AAF Marianna, Fla. 17 Sept 42—29 June 43 |
| 2. HOURS THIS TYPE     | 87:00                     |                              |  |
| 3. HOURS THIS MODEL    | 67:00                     |                              |  |
| 4. HOURS LAST 90 DAYS  | 41:00                     |                              |  |
| 5. HOURS LAST 30 DAYS  | 14:00                     |                              |  |
| 6. HOURS LAST 24 HOURS | 2:00                      |                              |  |
| 7. ACTUAL COMBAT HOURS | 107:00                    | 34:00                        |  |

8. TRAINING CLASS NO. AND SCHOOL, OTU, CTS, ETC.

9. PHASE AND HOURS IN THIS PHASE

11. INSTRUMENT RATING

| TYPE               | DATE   | 12. TOTAL—INSTRUMENT |
|--------------------|--------|----------------------|
| White              | 1-6-49 |                      |
| LAST CHECK STATION | DATE   |                      |
| Standiford         | 1-6-48 |                      |

12. Was operator on instruments at time of accident or immediately before?  YES  NO

13. TOTAL—INSTRUMENT

14. INSTRUMENT LAST 6 MOS.

15. INSTRUMENT LAST 30 DAYS

16. NIGHT, LAST 6 MOS.

17. NIGHT, LAST 30 DAYS

**Section E—PERSONNEL INVOLVED (Including operator and all other persons, whether in plane or not)**

| DUTY AT TIME OF ACCIDENT | NAME (Last Name First) | TYPE OF AERO. RATING (symbols) | SERIAL NO. | GRADE AND BRANCH OF SERVICE | PERM. CLASS. SYMBOL (AAF Reg. 15-1) | ORG. ASSIGNMENT—AIR FORCE OR COMMAND GROUP NUMBER AND TYPE STATION | FATAL MAJOR MINOR NONE MISSING UNKNOWN |    |     |    | PARACHUTES USED SUCCESSFUL |    |     |    |  |  |  |  |  |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|----|-----|----|----------------------------|----|-----|----|--|--|--|--|--|
|                          |                        |                                |            |                             |                                     |  | Yes                                    | No | Yes | No | Yes                        | No | Yes | No |  |  |  |  |  |
| CP                       | MANTELL, THOMAS F. JR. | P                              | 0-806873   | Capt. KYANG                 |                                     | 11AF123FG Standiford Fld.  |  |    |     |    |                            |    |     |    |  |  |  |  |  |
|                          |                        |                                |            |                             |                                     | 123000   |  |    |     |    |                            |    |     |    |  |  |  |  |  |

O. K. FOR FILES BY *[Signature]*

Printed 2-17

ARMY AIR FORCES  
**REPORT OF MAJOR ACCIDENT**

*NRV*

Use this form in accordance with AAF Reg. 62-14 and "Aircraft Accident Investigator's Handbook" issued by Office of Flying Safety, Headquarters, AAF.  
Fill in all spaces except where otherwise indicated.  
If additional space is needed, use additional sheet(s) and identify by proper section letter and subsection number.

|                                      |                             |      |                        |              |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------|------------------------|--------------|
| FIELD OFFICE - DO NOT SEE THIS SPACE | PRELIMINARY REPORT RECEIVED | DATE | TYPE, MODEL AND SERIES | ACCIDENT NO. |
|                                      | FORM 14 RECEIVED            | 1-8  |                        |              |
|                                      | EVALUATED BY                | 1/26 |                        |              |
|                                      | VERIFIED BY                 | 2-9  |                        |              |
|                                      | CHECKED BY                  | 2-17 |                        |              |
|                                      | CODED BY                    | 2-17 |                        |              |
| NO. AIRCRAFT INVOLVED                |                             |      |                        |              |

**Section A—GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. PLACE OF ACCIDENT—State, County, Nearest Town, Distance and Direction from Base.  
**Kentucky, Simpson, Franklin, 3.5 miles SW**

Nearest Army Airfield, Distance and Direction from Base.  
**Godman Field, 90 miles SSW**

2. WAS COLLISION WITH OTHER AIRCRAFT?  
 Yes  No

AF No. of AIRCRAFT INVOLVED (File separate Form 14 for each aircraft)  
**7 Jan 48** DATE

HOUR AND TIME ZONE  
**1518 CST**

DAY  NIGHT

**Section B—AIRCRAFT**

1. AIRCRAFT NO.  
**44-63869**

2. TYPE MODEL SERIES  
**P 51 D**

3. HOME STATION  
**Standiford Field, Louisville, Ky.**

4. AIR FORCE OR COMMAND SUBCOMMAND WING (GROUP NO. AND TYPE) SQUADRON  
**11th ANW 52 55th 123rd Ftr Op (NG) 165th**

5. DATE OF MANUFACTURE TOTAL HOURS DATE LAST OVERHAUL OVERHAULING DEPOT OR SUB-DEPOT HOURS SINCE OVERHAUL  
**15 Dec 44 172:50 none none none**

6. Attach detailed statement of tech orders having direct bearing on this accident which have not been complied with. Describe orders and give reasons for noncompliance.

**Section C—OPERATOR (Person at controls at time of accident)**

1. LAST NAME FIRST NAME MIDDLE INITIAL GRADE BRANCH ASN SEX AGE  
**MANTELL, THOMAS F. JR. Captain KYANG 0-806873 M 35**

2. ATTACHED STATION AF OR COMMAND SUBCOMMAND WING GROUP NO. AND TYPE SQUADRON  
**276 ANG 52 555FF 123 5FF 165<sup>FF</sup>**

3. ASSIGNED STATION AF OR COMMAND SUBCOMMAND WING GROUP NO. AND TYPE SQUADRON  
**Standiford Field, Ky 11th ANW 52 55th 123rd Ftr Op 165th**

4. ABELNAUTICAL RATING  Yes  No PRESENT RATING DATE RECEIVED 5. NORMAL DUTY STATUS  
**Pilot 6-30-45 Pilot**

**Section D—OPERATOR'S FLYING EXPERIENCE (Including civilian)**

FLYING TIME 1st PILOT OR SOLO STUDENT OTHER PILOT OR OTHER STUDENT

1. TOTAL HOURS  
**1608:00 1259:00**

2. HOURS THIS TYPE  
**67:00**

3. HOURS THIS MODEL  
**67:00**

4. HOURS LAST 90 DAYS  
**41:00**

5. HOURS LAST 30 DAYS  
**14:00**

6. HOURS LAST 24 HOURS  
**2:00**

7. ACTUAL COMBAT HOURS  
**107:00 34:00**

8. TRAINING CLASS NO. AND SCHOOL, OTU, CCTS, ETC.

9. PHASE AND HOURS IN THIS PHASE  
PHASE **B** DUAL OR COPILOT SOLO OR 1ST PILOT

10. AAF SCHOOLS PREVIOUSLY ATTENDED AND DATES  
**A/O Training- Marianna AAF Marianna, Fla. 17 Sept 42- 29 June 43**

11. INSTRUMENT RATING  
TYPE **White** DATE **1-6-49**  
LAST CHECK STATION **Standiford** DATE **1-6-48**

12. Was operator on instruments at time of accident or immediately before?  
 Yes  No

13. TOTAL—INSTRUMENT  
14. INSTRUMENT LAST 6 MOS.  
15. INSTRUMENT LAST 30 DAYS  
16. NIGHT, LAST 6 MOS.  
17. NIGHT, LAST 30 DAYS

**Section E—PERSONNEL INVOLVED (Including operator and all other persons, whether in plane or not)**

| DUTY AT TIME OF ACCIDENT | NAME (Last Name First) | TYPE OF AERO. RATING (Cyt-dots) | SERIAL NO. | GRADE AND BRANCH OF SERVICE | PERM. CLASS. SYMBOL (AAF Reg. 15-1) | ORG. ASSIGNMENT—AIR FORCE OR COMMAND (GROUP NUMBER AND TYPE STATION) | FATAL MAJOR MINOR NOSE MISSING UN- KNOWN |     | PARACHUTES |             |      |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|-----|------------|-------------|------|
|                          |                        |                                 |            |                             |                                     |  | Yes                                      | No  | Used       | RITERS- FUL |      |
| (1)                      | (2)                    | (3)                             | (4)        | (5)                         | (6)                                 | (7)  | (8)                                      | (9) | (10)       | (11)        | (12) |
| <i>Pl</i>                | MANTELL, THOMAS F. JR. | P                               | 0-806873   | Capt. KYANG                 |                                     | 11AF123FG Standiford Fld.  |  |     |            |             | X    |
|                          |                        |                                 |            |                             |                                     | 1233000  |  |     |            |             |      |

**O. K. FOR FILES**  
BY *[Signature]*

*Printed by 2-17*



## Section F—DAMAGE

Describe briefly the extent of the damage which occurred. (If no damage, write "None." If aircraft is missing, write "Missing." If aircraft was totally wrecked, so state)

1. TO AIRCRAFT

Aircraft totally wrecked

2. TO ENGINE

1

Wrecked

2

3

4

3. TO PROPELLER

1

Wrecked

2

3

4

4. TO PRIVATE PROPERTY (EXPLAIN ON ATTACHMENTS)

## Section G—POWER PLANT FAILURE

(Use this section of the form if power plant failure was a contributing cause factor in the accident. This must be signed by engineering officer)

1. DURATION OF FLIGHT SINCE LAST TAKE-OFF

HOURS

MINUTES

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

2. ENGINE MODEL

3. ENGINE NO.

4. ENGINE-HOURS SINCE LAST MAJOR OVERHAUL

5. DEPOT OR SUB-DEPOT PERFORMING OVERHAUL

6. TOTAL ENGINE-HOURS

7. PROPELLER MODEL

8. PROPELLER-HOURS SINCE MAJOR OVERHAUL

9. STATEMENT OF OPERATOR, IF AVAILABLE, ON BEHAVIOR OF POWER PLANT AND MANIPULATION OF CONTROLS IMMEDIATELY BEFORE FAILURE

10. STATEMENT OF ENGINEERING OFFICER, MECHANIC, AND OTHERS AS TO WHAT FAILED AND PROBABLE REASONS WHY

11. OCTANE RATING OF FUEL  ENGINEERING OFFICER (Name, Grade, and Station)

## Section H—AIRFRAME, LANDING GEAR, OR OTHER MATERIEL

(Use this section if materiel failure was a contributing cause factor in the accident. This must be signed by engineering officer)

1. DESCRIBE THE MATERIEL FAILURE, INCLUDING STATEMENT OF KIND OF FLIGHT AT THE TIME OF FAILURE AND ALL FACTORS WHICH MIGHT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TOWARD THE FAILURE

123456  
- 2 -ENGINEERING OFFICER  
(Name, Grade, and Station)

## Section I—SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

(Use this section if special equipment—parachutes, radio, dinghies, oxygen equipment, fire extinguishers, etc.—was a contributing cause factor in the accident for any reason including failure, misuse, or by reason of not being in the plane)

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE SPECIAL EQUIPMENT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACCIDENT OR TO ITS RESULTS

Oxygen system was not serviced. System was in working order

**Section J--AIRPORT AND FACILITIES AND AIRWAY FACILITIES**

(Use this section if the airport or its facilities or airway facilities were a contributing factor in the accident, either because of inadequacy, condition, or poor maintenance)

1. EXPLAIN

**Section K--WEATHER (This must be signed by weather officer of the reporting station).**

1. WHAT WAS THE WEATHER AT THE TIME AND PLACE OF THE ACCIDENT?

**CAVU**

2. IF WEATHER WAS A FACTOR IN THE ACCIDENT, STATE HOW AND ATTACH COPY OF WEATHER REPORTS

WEATHER OFFICER  
(Name, Grade, and Station) →

**Section L--GENERAL INFORMATION.**

1. IF ERROR ON THE PART OF SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE OPERATOR WAS A FACTOR, STATE HOW

2. WHAT WAS THE MISSION?

**Ferry and Navigational training** 3

3. DID FIRE OCCUR UPON CRASHING?

Yes  No

4. WERE THERE ANY VIOLATIONS OF ORDERS OR REGULATIONS? (Explain)

**Violated AAF Reg. 60-16 Par. 43. However Capt. Mantell was requested by Godman Field Control Tower to investigate objects in the sky, causing this Officer to go above limits of AAF Reg. 60-16**

- 3 -

5. DISCIPLINARY ACTION TAKEN OR CONTEMPLATED

6. KIND OF CLEARANCE (Aircraft Form 23)

**Form 23**

FROM

**Marietta, Ga.**

*2* TO

OR LOCAL

**Standiford Field, Ky.**

STATION OF LAST DEPARTURE

**Marietta, Ga.**

7. IF UR FORM 54 HAS BEEN SUBMITTED ON ANY FEATURE INVOLVED IN THE ACCIDENT, GIVE UR NO. AND DATE

NO.

DATE

EXPLAIN FULLY AND ATTACH COPY

8. ARE COPIES OF AAF FORMS 1, 1A, ATTACHED HERETO AS REQUIRED BY AAF REGULATION 63-147

Yes  No

9. ARE PHOTOS ATTACHED?

Yes  No

Section M—DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

1. TELL IN NARRATIVE FORM, IN AS MUCH DETAIL AS NECESSARY, EVERYTHING THAT IS KNOWN ABOUT THE ACCIDENT. BE SURE TO COVER EVERYTHING THAT MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TOWARD THE ACCIDENT. INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO PREVENT SIMILAR ACCIDENTS, AND ACTION TAKEN.

On 7 January 1948 at approximately 1450-1455, Captain Mantell was leading a flight of four (4) P-51 aircraft on a flight from Marietta Air Base, Marietta, Georgia to Standiford Field at Louisville, Kentucky. Nearing Godman Field, Kentucky, the flight was contacted by the Godman Field Control Tower and requested to identify an object in the sky if the mission would permit. Captain Mantell replied that his mission was ferrying aircraft and that he would attempt to identify the object in the sky. Captain Mantell began a maximum climb in left spirals until about 14000 feet and from there a straight climb at maximum, on a compass heading of approximately 220 degrees. No conversation between Captain Mantell and any member of his flight revealed a clue as to his intentions. One pilot left the flight as the climb began, the remaining two discontinued the climb at approximately 22000 feet. When last observed by the wing man Lt. Clements, Captain Mantell was in a maximum climb at 22500 feet, the aircraft in perfect control. Captain Mantell was heard to say in ship to ship conversation that he would go to 25000 feet for about ten minutes and then come down. Transmission was garbled and attempts to contact Captain Mantell by his flight were unanswered. Lt. Clements was the only pilot equipped with an oxygen mask. This flight had been planned and scheduled as a ferry and navigational trip at low level.

Consensus is that Captain Mantell lost consciousness at approximately 25000 feet, the P-51 being trimmed for a maximum climb continued to climb gradually leveling out as increasing altitude caused decrease in power. The aircraft began to fly in reasonably level attitude at about 30000 feet. It then began a gradual turn to the left because of torque, slowly increasing degree of bank as nose depressed, finally began a spiralling dive which resulted in excessive speeds causing gradual disintegration of aircraft which probably began between 10000 and 20000 feet.

Since canopy lock was in place after crash, it is assumed that Captain Mantell made no attempt to abandon the aircraft, and was unconscious at moment of crash or had died from lack of oxygen before aircraft began the spiralling dive from about 30000 feet.

Parts of the aircraft were found as far as six-tenths (estimated) of a mile from central wreckage. The parts were scattered from North to South. The aircraft came straight down in a horizontal position and landed on the left side. The left wing came off while in the air and landed 100 feet from the central wreckage. The aircraft did not slide forward after contact with the ground. Throttle was set at one-fourth open, mixture control in "Idle-Cut-Off", and prop control in "Full Increase RPM".

2. RECOMMENDATIONS That all pilots be briefed again on use of oxygen and the effects of lack of same. That all pilots be issued properly fitted mask. Another order issued that no pilot go above 12000 feet without oxygen under any circumstances. No aircraft be cleared for Cross-Country unless it be serviced with oxygen. **A**

The engine be sent to Wright Field for further study.

3. ACTION TAKEN Oxygen classes will start immediately, for all pilots and crew members. All aircraft will be equipped with oxygen. Pilots carry mask, helmet, goggles and gloves on all flights.

1235000

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| ACCIDENT INVESTIGATING BOARD FROM REPORTING STATION. EACH MEMBER MUST SIGN. |                       | STATION:                   |                      |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| NAME - PRESIDENT  |                       | Standiford Field, Kentucky |                      |
| <i>Stanley J. Davis</i>   | NAME - MEMBER         | <i>Lamar D. Hines</i>      | NAME - INVESTIGATOR  |
| GRADE   | ORGANIZATION          | GRADE                      | ORGANIZATION         |
| Lt. Col.  | 123rd Fighter Gr.     | 2nd. Lt.                   | Hdq. Air Service Gr. |
| NAME - MEMBER   |                       | NAME - MEMBER              |                      |
| <i>Lee J. Marble</i>  | <i>Byron A. Jones</i> | <i>Richard A. Lyon</i>     |                      |
| GRADE   | ORGANIZATION          | GRADE                      | ORGANIZATION         |
| Major   | 165th Fighter Sq.     | Captain                    | Hdq. Air Service Gr. |
|   |                       |                            |                      |
|   |                       |                            |                      |



The control tower watched an object in the sky, that flashed in the sunshine. Flying Saucers someone quoted. Mysterious and little known, reliable pilots and others had seen such things in the skies. Air Force :  
curiosity remained much on the issue such to the provocation of the  
press generally. There was much excitement over flying saucers,  
and everyone