48-1-7-1

OFFICE OF SENIOR AIR INSTRUCTOR
Kentucky Air National Guard
Standiford Field
P. O. Box 36, Camp Taylor Branch
Louisville 13, Kentucky

22 January 1948

SUBJECT: Transmittal of AF Form 14

TO : Adjutant General, Commonwealth of Kentucky, Frankfort, Kentucky

1. Transmitted herewith in accordance with WDB Air Memorandum 62-4A dated 11 August 1947 is AF Form 14 and allied papers pertaining to aircraft accident 7 January 1948 involving P-51D type aircraft, serial number 44-63867 the aircraft piloted by Captain Thomas F. Lantell Jr. ASN O 806 73, Pilot.

2. Recommend that all pilots be completely indoctrinated in the proper utilization of oxygen equipment, also that the flight surgeon familiarize all rated personnel with known ill effects of anoxia.

Herbert A. Pott
Colonel USAF
Senior Air Instructor

12 Incls:
1. Statement of William J. Philips
2. AF Form 23
3. AF Form 14
4. AF Form 1
5. List of previous write ups on Form 1a
6. Statement of investigating Officer
7. Statement of Bodman Field Control Tower Operator
8. Statement of Lt. Clements
9. Statement of Glenn T. Eaves
10. Statement of Mrs. Carrie A. Philips
11. Statement of William C. Eaves
12. Photographs of accident

123...

-51-

BASIC: Ltr, Office of Senior Air Instructor, Ky Air NG, Louisville, Ky, SUBJECT: "Transmittal of WD AF Form 14," Cont'd.

1st Ind. RLM:tld

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY, MILITARY DEPARTMENT, AGO, Frankfort, 29 January 1948.

TO: Commanding General, 11th AF, 1612 S Cameron Street, Harrisburg, Pa.

Paragraph 2, basic communication, complied with.

ROSCOE L. MURRAY,
Brigadier General, Ky.N.G.,
The Adjutant General.

12 Incls:
n/c

Off of Senior Air Instr, Ky ANG to Adj. Gen., Commonwealth of Ky. 22 Jan 48
Subject: Transmittal of WD AF Form 14.

EAFEL 360.33 2nd Ind.

HQ ELEVENTH AIR FORCE, Harrisburg, Pa. 10 FEB 1948

TO: Commanding General, Air Defense Command, Mitchel Air Force Base, Hempstead, New York.

Recommendations of the aircraft accident investigation board and action taken by the Adjutant General, Ky NG, concurred in.

12 Incls: n/c

RALPH A. SNAVELY
Brigadier General, U. S. Air Force
Commanding

-52-

Transmittal of WD AF Form 14.

19 FEB 1948

201
[illegible]99 (22 Jan 48) 3rd Ind.
HQ, AIR DEFENSE COMMAND, MITCHEL AIR FORCE BASE, N.Y.

THRU: Chief, National Guard Bureau, Washington, D. C.

TO : Chief, Flying Safety Division, United States Air Force, Langley Air Force Base, Virginia

1. The findings of the Aircraft Accident Investigating Board are concurred in at this headquarters.

2. This accident will be brought to the attention of all pilots under the jurisdiction of this command.

FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL:

R. B. BARNARD
Capt. USAF,
Actg. Asst. Adj. Gen.

12 Incls: w/d

OSNGB 4th Ind

Hq., Dept. of the Army, SS, USA, National Guard Bureau, Washington 25, D. C.
11 Mar 48
THRU: Office of the Air Inspector, United States Air Force, Washington 25, D. C.
ATTN: Major J. C. Wing

TO: Chief of Staff, USAF, Office of the Air Inspector, Flying Safety Division, Langley Field, Virginia

The National Guard Bureau concurs with recommendations of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Board and action taken by the Senior Air Instructor.

FOR THE CHIEF, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU:

W. A. R. ROBERTSON
Colonel, NGB
Chief, Aviation Group
National Guard Bureau

BASIC CODE SHEET

8	0	4	0	7	0	0	1

Accident Number

GENERAL INFORMATION

-	-	P	0	S	7	D

Type, Model and Series

ACCIDENT TYPE		
11		Collision with Other aircraft
12		Collision with ground or water
13		Collision, other
14		Stall
15		Hard Landing
16		Landing, wheels-up
17		Groundloop
18		Nose-up or Nose-over
19		Premature Rot. or Col. of L.G.
20		Fire on Ground
21		Spin or Spiral
22		Abandoned aircraft
23	✓	Disintegration
24		Explosion
98		N.E.C.
99		Undetermined

WEATHER		
1		Rain
2		Fog
3		Dust, sand, smoke, or haze
4		Snow
5		Sleet or hail
6		Wind
7		Wing or propeller ice
8		Thunderstorms
9		Turbulence
A		Clouds
J	✓	NOT A FACTOR
Y		N.E.C.
Z		Undetermined

FLIGHT REFERENCE		
1	✓	Contact
2		Instrument (actual)
3		Instrument (simulated)
4		On Top
9		Undetermined

PHASE OF FLIGHT		
01		Engines running, not taxiing
02		Taxiing
03		Takeoff
04		Pattern
05		Final Approach and Landing
06		Go around
07	✓	Normal Flight
08		Ground Gunnery Pass
09		Aerial Gunnery Pass
10		Acrobatics
11		Towing
98		N.E.C.
99		Undetermined

FORMATION		
1		In Formation
2	✓	Not in Formation

TIME OF ACCIDENT		
1	✓	Day
2		Night

ALTITUDE OF FLIGHT		
1		High Altitude
2		Low Altitude
3	✓	Normal Flight
4		Ground or Pattern
9		Undetermined

CAUSE FACTORS

Pers.		UNSAFE ACTS Major		Specific		Viol.		Major	UNSAFE CONDITIONS Specific	Manr	Defects		Seq.	UNDET
0	1	1	2	9	8	2	0						3 2	

No. of Cards required 2
Evaluated by:
Checked by:

---- CHECK LIST ----

FOR AF LETTER 62-21 AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FOR ACCIDENT NUMBER 48-1-9-1

62-21 Ltr or Additional Info Received BY:	Date Recd	Checked By:	Date Returned Proc. Section
A/C Accident Invest.	3/26	Flm 3-31	
Bomber-Cargo Section Accident Analysis			
Fighter-Trainer Section Accident Analysis	4/1	[illegible]	4-2

COMMENTS:

[illegible]

RESTRICTED

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, Standiford Field, Louisville, Kentucky

5. RESULTS TO AIRCRAFT: Demolished

6. HISTORY OF AIRCRAFT AND ENGINES:

AIRCRAFT

Date of manufacture - 15 December 1944
Total hours - 164:50, 23 December 1947, EST 9:35 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. Mantell Jr., Captain, O-806873, 123rd Fighter Group, 165th Fighter Squadron, Standiford Field, Louisville, Kentucky

8. PILOT HISTORY:

	1st Pilot	Other
Total hours	1600:00	559:00
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	14:00	00:00
Hours last 24 hours	2:00	00:00
Actual Combat hours	107:00	34:00

9. COPILOT HISTORY: Not applicable

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

Not applicable

RESTRICTED

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

12. NARRATION OF EVENTS: On the 9th 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. Harmond, 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 come 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 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)

RESTRICTED

i. At 16,000 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 ETA for Standiford had elapsed and suggested that he notify Godman 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 1200 o'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. Hayes, a civilian from Franklin, Kentucky, circling and after about three circles started into a power dive slowly rotating. (Exhibits 6 and 7)

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 CST, 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 ailerons fuselage, empennage 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 belt.

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 judgement displayed by Captain Mantell in that he elected to climb to altitude without oxygen equipment.

b. The effects of anoxia 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 anoxia 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 anoxia in a very short time. AF publication

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 Kimball 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 Kimball 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 incidental, 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 Kimball 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 Kimball 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 Bulletin of Flying Safety publication "Crash and Consequence."

17. STATEMENT OF INTERESTED:

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

ROBERT R. RANKIN
Captain, USAF

RESTRICTED

J. W. Johnson
Major, USAF

22-77a

RESTRICTED

ENCLOSURES

1. Clearance Form 23
2. Statement of Major Derby
3. Statement of 1st Lt. Robert K. Hendricks
4. Statement of 1st Lt. Albert H. Clements
5. Statement of Mrs. Carrie A. Phillips
6. Statement of Glen T. Hynes
7. Statement of William J. Phillips
8. Statement of William C. Hynes
9. Statement of Harry W. Booker
10. Sketch of scene of accident

RECEIVED
FIELD OFFICE OF
THE AIR INSPECTOR
FEB 24 1948
LANGLEY FIELD
VIRGINIA

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INVOLVING P-51D NO. 44-63869

1. DATE AND TIME OF ACCIDENT: 7 January 1946, 1518 CST

2. LOCATION OF ACCIDENT: 5 miles southwest of Franklin, Kentucky

3. AIRCRAFT: P-51D No. 44-63869

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5. RESULTS TO AIRCRAFT: Demolished

6. HISTORY OF AIRCRAFT AND ENGINES:

AIRCRAFT

Date of manufacture - 15 December 1944
Total hours - 164:50, 23 December 1947, EST 9:35 to time of crash
Date last overhaul - new

ENGINES

Model - V-1650-7
Number - V-323030
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. Mantell Jr., Captain, O-806873, 123rd Fighter Group, 165th Fighter Squadron, Standiford Field, Louisville, Kentucky

8. PILOT HISTORY:

	1st Pilot	Other
Total hours	1603:00	559:00
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	14:00	00:00
Hours last 24 hours	2:00	00:00
Actual Combat hours	107:00	34:00

9. COPILOT HISTORY: Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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

12. NARRATION OF EVENTS: On the 9th 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 indidant 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 seen 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.

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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)

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j. Captain Mantell, the flight leader and Lt. Hammond, the left wingman, did not have oxygen or oxygen masks. (Exhibits 4 and 5)

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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)

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v. Captain Mantell's aircraft was next observed by William O. Mayes, a civilian from Franklin, Kentucky, circling and after about three circles started into a power dive slowly rotating. (Exhibits 6 and 7)

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 descents (Exhibits 6, 7, 8 and 9)

z. The aircraft crashed at approximately 1520 CST, 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 ailerons fuselage, empennage and wings from the engine were scattered over an area of 1/4 of a mile. (Exhibits 10 and 11)

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 belt.

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 judgement displayed by Captain Mantell in that he elected to climb to altitude without oxygen equipment.

b. The effects of anoxia 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 anoxia 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 anoxia in a very short time. AF publication

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 incidently, had been aware of anoxia symptoms for some time, broke away from the lead ship, they estimated that their altitude was 27,500 feet. The range between 15,000 and 20,000 feet is relieved 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 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 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 published 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.

ROBERT R. RANKIN
Captain, USAF

RESTRICTED

ROBERT J. D. JOHNSON
Major, USAF

RESTRICTED

EXHIBITS

1. Clearance Form 23
2. Statement of Major Danby
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 C. Hayes
9. Statement of Harry W. Booker
10. Sketch of scene of accident
11. Photographs

RESTRICTED

WAR DEPARTMENT
AAF FORM NO. 23
(REVISED AUG. 15, 1943)

ARMY AIR FORCES

AIRCRAFT CLEARANCE

[redacted]

A OPERATIONS OFFICE

ADDRESS: MARIETTA ARMY AIR FIELD, MARIETTA, GEORGIA

RESTRICTED

DATE: 7 Jan 1948

PILOT'S NAME	RANK	HOME STATION	ORGANIZATION	AIRCRAFT NUMBER
B T.F. Mantell Jr. 0-806873	Capt	DXL	165th Ftr Sq.	44-63869

NAME, INITIALS, RANK, HOME STATION OF OTHER OCCUPANTS

R.K. Hendricks 1st. Lt. 0-8063831 73336
A.W. Clements 1st. Lt. 0-732166 73800
R.A. Hammond 2nd. Lt. 0-8085976 73787

I certify that the weight and balance on this aircraft is identical with that shown on Form "F" filed at DXL
DATE 1-48 Pilots Int. TFM

This aircraft is equipped with instruments and flishlight for IFR and Night Flights
Pilots Initials TFM

LIST ADDITIONAL PASSENGERS ON SEPARATE SHEET

C WEATHER DATA — EXISTING LOCAL

EXISTING ROUTE

DESTINATION (LATEST) — TIME

ALTERNATE (LATEST) — TIME

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
Edwin A. Wood
EDWIN A. WOOD
Capt., USAF
Operations Officer

ALTIMETER SETTINGS: LOCAL / DESTINATION / ALTERNATE

RESET ALTIMETER BEFORE APPROACH

FORECASTS (ESTIMATED FLIGHT TIME PLUS 2 HOURS)

ROUTE

DESTINATION

ALTERNATE

I have been adequately briefed on the current WX and forecast WX effecting my flight and I understand the WX situation. (S) Thomas F. Mantell Jr.
PILOTS SIGNATURE

WINDS ALOFT GIVE ALT. DIR. VEL. AS PILOT REQUESTS

AAF FORM 23A REQUIRED ☐ NOT REQUIRED ☒ FORECASTER VOID 1420C TIME

D FLIGHT PLAN (PILOT COMPLETES) RADIO CALLS: NC 3869 4 | TYPE OF AIRCRAFT: P51 | PILOT (LAST NAME ONLY): Mantell | POINT OF DEPARTURE: MARIETTA AAF

1	2	3	4
☐ CFR ☐ IFR	☐ CFR ☐ IFR	☐ CFR ☐ IFR	☐ CFR ☐ IFR
ALT VFR	ALT	ALT	ALT
ROUTE Direct	ROUTE	ROUTE	ROUTE
TO DXL	TO	TO	TO

AIRPORT OF FIRST INTENDED LANDING: DXL | TRUE AIR SPEED: 300 | TRANSMITTING FREQUENCIES: 126.18 KC "B" KC "A" KC | RECEIVER ONLY ☐ | NO RADIO ☐

PROPOSED TAKE OFF TIME: 1330 C | EST. TIME ENROUTE: 1 Hr. 10 Min. | ALTERNATE AIRPORT: | HOURS OF FUEL (CRUISING): 3 Plus | INSTRUMENT RATING: NONE ☐ TYPE N | FLIGHT PRIORITY: 3-2

REMARKS: SHOW FIXES WHICH WILL BE REPORTED WHILE ON INSTRUMENT FLIGHT.

TOWER FREQUENCIES: AAF T R 396 KCS and "L" Channel

DESTINATION "B" KC | ALTERNATE KC | WEATHER MODE RECEIVED ☐ YES ☐ NO | TO DESTINATION 310 | MILEAGE | DEST. TO ALTERNATE

PILOT'S SIGNATURE: (S) Thomas F. Mantell Jr.

☐ COMMAND PILOT ☐ SENIOR PILOT ☐ CONTRACT PILOT OF CARGO AIRCRAFT ☐ PILOT

E FLIGHT CLEARANCE AUTHORIZATION

SUBMITTED TO: AFS | TIME: 1420 | BY: RC

TIME APPROVAL RECEIVED | CONTROL INSTRUCTIONS RECEIVED

INSTRUCTIONS AND APPROVAL TRANSMITTED TO PILOT OR TOWER BY: TR | ACTUAL TAKE OFF TIME: 1442 E

OPERATIONS IDENTIFICATION NO.

ROBERT C. [illegible], COL AF, CO. AFS/XE
CLEARING AUTHORITY

CLEARANCE OFFICER

F PILOT COMPLETE FIRST LINE BELOW PRESENT TO LINE CREWMAN BEFORE TAKE-OFF.	DEPARTURE RECORD			LINE CREWMAN WILL COMPLETE SECOND LINE AND DELIVER TO OPERATIONS OFFICE.
PILOT (LAST NAME ONLY)	AIRC[illegible] NUMBER	ACTUAL FUEL	GROSS WEIGHT	
DATE OF DEPARTURE	TIME	NUMBER PERSONS ON BOARD	LINE CREWMANS SIGNATURE	

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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. Darcy
Major, AC (NG)

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

ROBERT J. D. JOHNSON
Major, USAF

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

A flight of four P-51 departed Mareitta, Georgia at 1342 C direct to Standiford Field, Louisville, Kentucky. Captain 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 45 degrees. 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 Captain Mantell was talking so I went over to channel B.

The only part of the coversation between Captain 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 330° and we will try to guide you." Captain 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 Captain Mantell, I left the flight at approximately 1440 C and landed at Standifort at 1501 C.

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

s/Robert K. Hendricks
ROBERT K. HENDRICKS
1st Lt. Kentucky N.G.

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

ROBERT D. JOHNSON
Major, USAF

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January 9, 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 1335 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. Hendricks his wingman, as the element wingman. The first two ships were off the ground at about 1335, followed by the second two a minute later. Following the join-up in regular four ship formation, the flight proceeded on course towards Louisville, climbing up to 5000' 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° orbits over the reservoir and then climbed back up to 5000' 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 1h55 Lt. Hendricks, #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 h7" 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 approximately 220°, 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 not 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 ETA 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 were looking for.

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He then replied "Look, there it is out there at 1200 o'clock", and I was albe to discorn 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 dissapeared, 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 doen altiutde. 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 out ultimate destination was. By the time that I switched to B Baker channel, after we started climbing, we were appraarently out of range of the Godman Tower. I conjuntion with the last time when we left Capt. Mantell I would judge our position to be abbut 40 miles northwest of Bowling Green.

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

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

s/Robert J. D. Johnson
ROBERT J. D. JOHNSON
Major, USAF

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AFFIDAVIT

7 January 1948
5 miles southwest of
Franklin, Kentucky on
W. J. 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 #3, 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:

s/Richard L. Tyler
Captain Ky ANG

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AFFIDAVIT

January 7, 1948
Franklin, Kentucky

I, Glenn T. Mayes 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/Glen T. 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 ANG
Summary Court Officer

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

s/Richard L. Tyler
RICHARD L. TYLER
Captain Ky ANG

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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

WITNESS: I s/Douglas J. McGill
1050 Howland Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky

II s/Richard L. Tyler
132 Fortress Street, Louisville, Kentucky

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

s/Robert R. Rankin
Captain, USAF

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AFFIDAVIT

January 7, 1948
Franklin, Kentucky

I, William C. Hayes 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. 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:

s/Richard L. Tyler
RICHARD L. TYLER
Captain Ky ANG

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AFFIDAVIT

7 January 1948
Franklin, Kentucky

I, Harry W. Booker, Coroner of Simpson County, Franklin, Kentucky, upon examing 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 1948.

s/Harry W. Booker
Coroner, Simpson County,
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:

s/Richard L. Tyler
RICHARD L. TYLER
Captain Ky ANG

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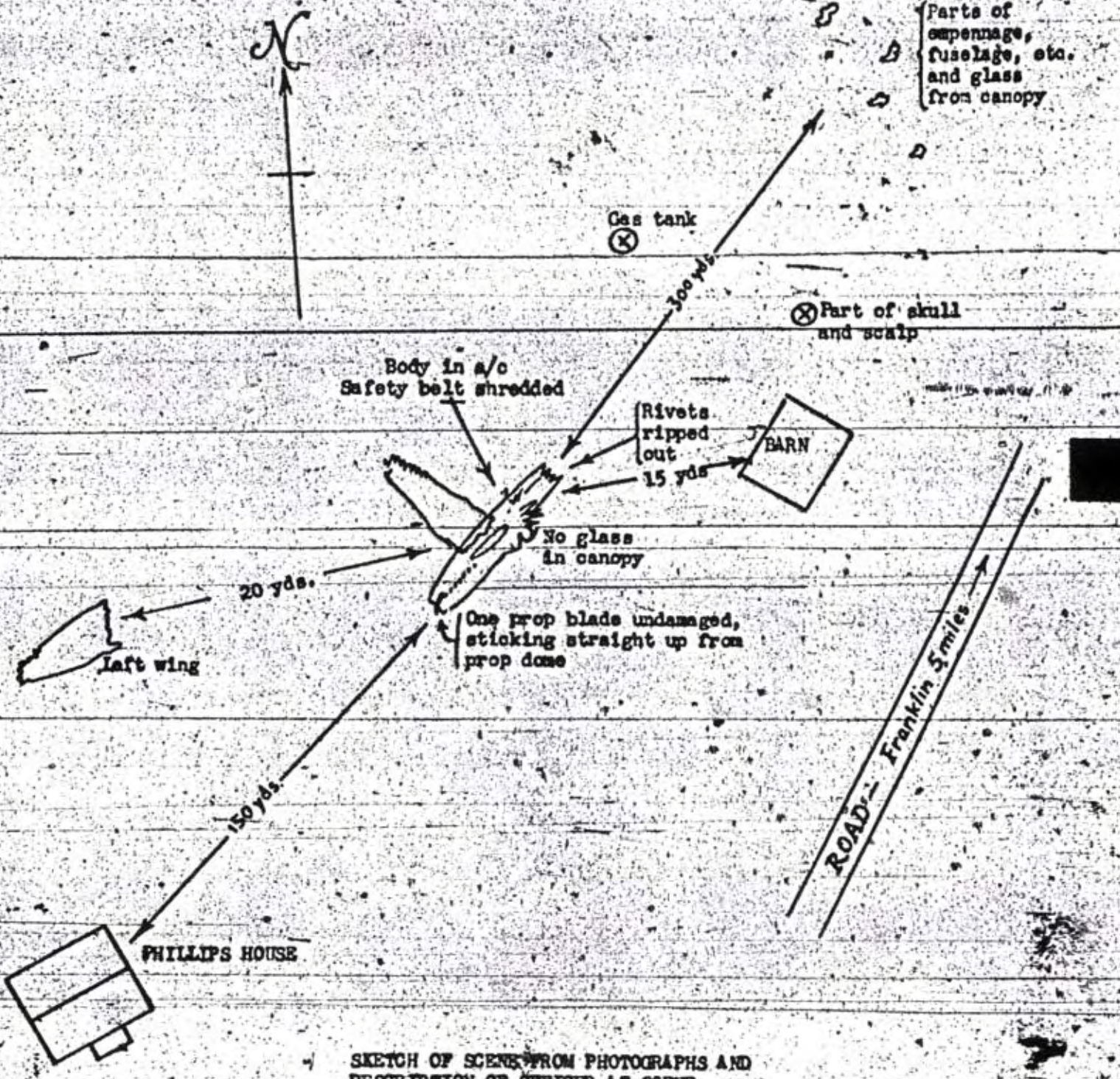
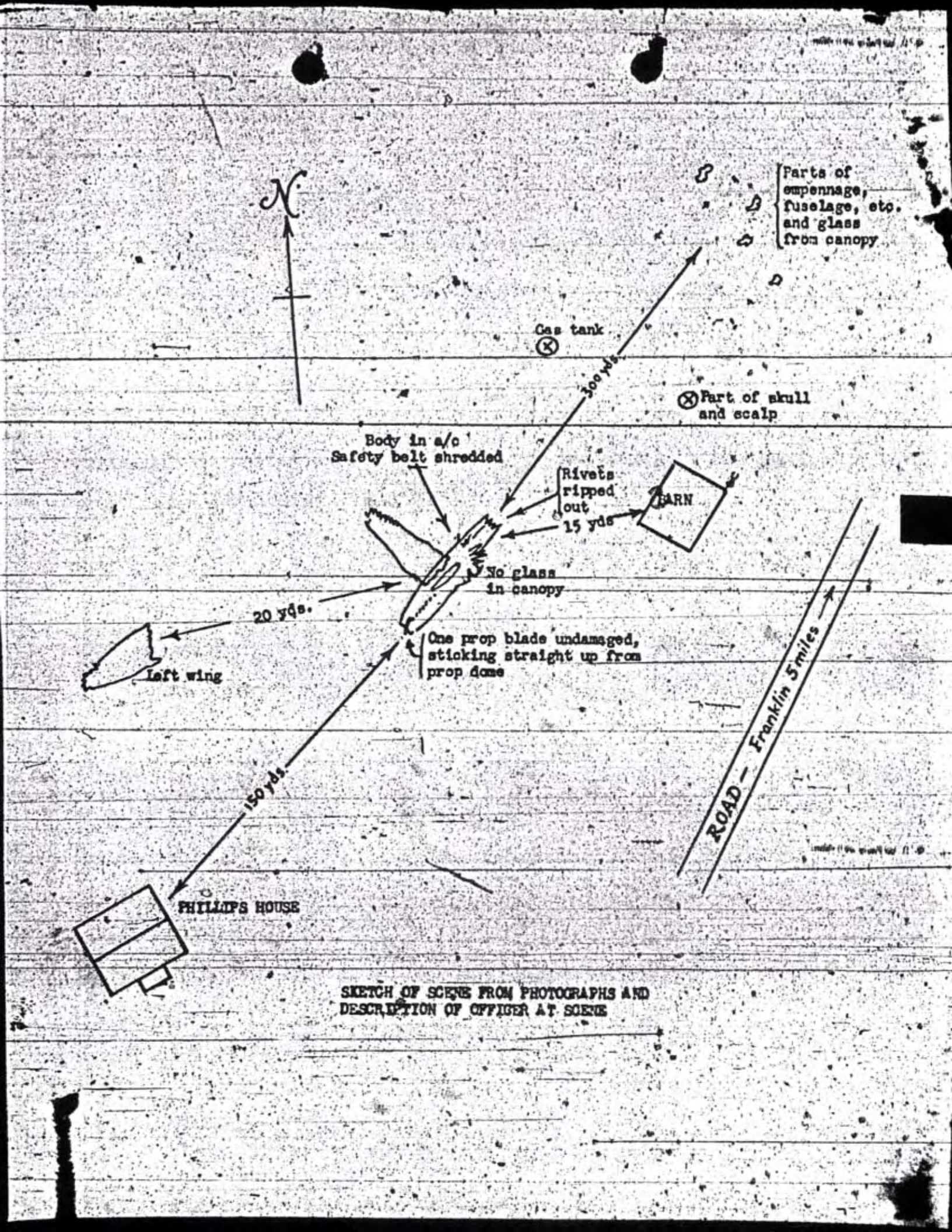


SKETCH OF SCENE FROM PHOTOGRAPHS AND DESCRIPTION OF OFFICER AT SCENE



SKETCH OF SCENE FROM PHOTOGRAPHS AND DESCRIPTION OF OFFICER AT SCENE