

Consolidated B-24H #41-29396

February 7, 1944

On the morning of February 7, 1944, a low cloud layer blanketed the vicinity of Wendover Army Air Field, Utah. B-24H #41-29396 was the tenth of eighteen aircraft to take off for a formation flying practice mission. The crew of the aircraft behind #396 reported that it made a normal takeoff and disappeared into the cloud layer. After the following aircraft took off and broke through the clouds #396 could not be located, but a column of black smoke was seen rising from below. A crash team from the base rushed to the scene and found that the bomber had veered off course and collided with terrain several miles from the runway, killing all nine men on board. An accident review board found that the pilot, Lt. Earl Bonville, had considerable experience and would not have carelessly allowed the aircraft to stray off course in the clouds. The board concluded that a mechanical failure such as engine trouble, a runaway propeller or defective navigational equipment might have caused the aircraft to swerve and crash. Today much of the wreckage has been salvaged, but a few pieces still remain. Special thanks to Mark Nicholls for help with locating this crash site. Site visited on 4/15/23.

Crew:

Pilot	1 Lt. Earl C. Bonville	Cedar River, MI
Co-Pilot	2 Lt. Archibald J. Lewis	Westfield, NJ
Navigator	2 Lt. John T. Lynch	Meding, NY
Engineer	T/Sgt. Leo H. Goodness	Brewer, ME
Radio Operator	S/Sgt. Carl D. Harman	Honaker, VA
Top Turret Gunner	Sgt. Robert E. Nicholas	Toledo, OH
Nose Gunner	Cpl. Angus A. McKenzie	Detroit, MI
Ball Turret Gunner	Sgt. Ward C. Flanagan	Bridgeport, CT
Tail Gunner	Cpl. William H. Little	Wilmington, DE



A pile of intake and exhaust pipes marks the spot where salvagers disassembled an engine.



Part of a wing flap mechanism



A 100 lb. practice bomb



This piece of melted aluminum was found near the impact site



The debris field of steel items left behind by aluminum salvagers



Part of a flexible chute for .50 cal machine gun ammunition



When tapped with a rock, this bailout bell cover still rang after nearly 80 years of rust



The ball turret support and drive mechanism



Part of a stainless steel firewall for a Pratt & Whitney R-1830 engine



An air filter



Numbers and the words “heated clothing” can be seen on this heated flight suit panel



Riveted aluminum, the American flag, and wildflowers blooming at the crash site



Co-pilot Lt. Archibald J. Lewis in his flight school graduation photo at Freeman Field, IN, 1943 (USAAF photo)



Radio operator S/Sgt. Carl D. Harman
(Courtesy of Find-A-Grave.com)



Tail gunner Cpl. William H. Little
(Courtesy of Find-A-Grave.com)



The crew of #41-29396 in front of a B-24E. Back row, left to right: Lt. Bonville, Lt. Lewis, Lt. Lynch, Lt. Klopp, T/Sgt. Goodness. Front row, left to right: S/Sgt. Harman, Sgt. Rordes, S/Sgt Flanagan, Cpl. McKenzie, Cpl. Little. Bombardier Lt. A.M. Klopp and assistant engineer/gunner Sgt. S.G. Rordes were not on #41-29396 at the time of the crash. Top turret gunner Sgt. Nicholas is not in the photo.

(Courtesy of Find-A-Grave.com)