

North American F-86H "Sabre" #55-2082

August 20, 1955

On August 20, 1955, North American F-86H #52-2082 took off from Wendover Air Force Base, Utah, at 5:53 a.m. At the controls was Colonel Henry H. Norman, commander of the 312th Fighter-Bomber Wing at Clovis Air Force Base, New Mexico. That morning he was at Wendover competing in the 9th Air Force Gunnery Match. A flight of four F-86s proceeded to the gunnery range 45 miles north east of the base and completed the gunnery portion of the mission without incident. Shortly thereafter, Col. Norman radioed the flight leader and advised him that his electrical inverters had failed. Then twelve miles from the base, at an altitude of 10,000 feet, the F-86 suffered an engine flame-out. Other pilots in the flight advised Col. Norman that both of his speed brakes were deployed, and he replied that the switch was in the retracted position. He attempted to glide back to Wendover and make a dead-stick landing, but the speed brakes prevented him from reaching the runway. Col. Norman decided to belly land the aircraft on some salt flats. The aircraft skidded a short distance, and the right wingtip struck a sand dune. This caused both wings to separate from the aircraft, and the fuselage began to roll. Col. Norman was thrown from the cockpit and killed instantly. An accident investigation determined that a fuel system failure caused the engine flame-out.

Today the crash site is a micro-site, with very few pieces of the aircraft remaining. The high alkaline content of the soil has badly corroded the pieces of wreckage. Special thanks to Craig Fuller and Dave McCurry for assistance with finding this crash site. Site visited on 1/23/21.



Possibly a piece of the canopy sliding mechanism



A small bezel from the instrument panel, probably for a switch or button



This piece of aluminum stringer shows how badly the parts have corroded



Some plexiglass from the canopy



Lots of rivets in this piece of structural aluminum



A badly corroded roller bearing race



.50 caliber brass casing from one of the machine guns



A small aluminum linkage and a fluid junction block resting on rubber from a landing gear inner tube



Various pieces with the American flag



Col. Henry H. Norman, Jr., from Memphis, Tennessee