

B-24E #41-28475

September 24, 1943

On the morning of September 24, 1943, B-24E #41-28475 left Mountain Home Army Air Field, Idaho, for a practice bombing mission. With pilot Lt. Richard Dawson at the controls, the aircraft climbed smoothly to 10,000 ft. and leveled off near the Bruneau Bombing Range. Suddenly, the electrical inverters failed. Two of the engines lost power, and gauges in the cockpit showed incorrect readings. The bomber began to lose altitude, so instructor pilot Lt. Gayle Madison took command. After making a mayday call on the radio, he salvoed the bombs and ordered the crew to bail out. The bombardier, Lt. Sammy West, used his parachute about 15 miles from the base, but the rest of the men stayed with the aircraft. Lt. Madison attempted to return to the airfield, but while passing over the Snake River a third engine lost power. Seeing that he couldn't reach the runway, Lt. Madison again ordered the remaining men to bail out. As they exited through the bomb bay, he steered the doomed aircraft away from the airfield and then jumped. At 11:35 a.m. #41-28475 impacted the ground south of the runway and exploded. Sgt. Frank Foxwell was found in the wreckage, and it was determined that either he didn't jump in time or his parachute failed to open. Site visited on 3/13/19. Special thanks to Mike Stowe, Lynda McDonald, and Craig Fuller for help with identifying this crash site.

Crew:

| | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Instructor pilot | 2nd Lt. Gayle E. Madison | Walla Walla, WA |
| Pilot | 2nd Lt. Richard C. Dawson | Fairfield, CT |
| Co-Pilot | 2nd Lt. Raymond D. Morin | Marlboro, MA |
| Bombardier | 2nd Lt. Sammy A. West | Blanco, TX |
| Engineer/Gunner | Sgt. John W. Wick | Buffalo, NY |
| Engineer/Gunner | Sgt. Leonard E. Slayton | Wills Point, TX |
| Gunner | Sgt. John H. Householder | Canton, OH |
| Gunner | Sgt. Charles R. Moler | Muncie, IN |
| Gunner | Sgt. Frank C. Foxwell | White Plains, NY |
| Radio/Gunner | Pfc. Joseph C. Brlansky | Johnstown, PA |



A part number stamped in ink. "GK" indicates this piece was made at the General Motors plant at Kansas City, KS



Melted rubber, probably from a self-sealing fuel tank



Control cable pulleys



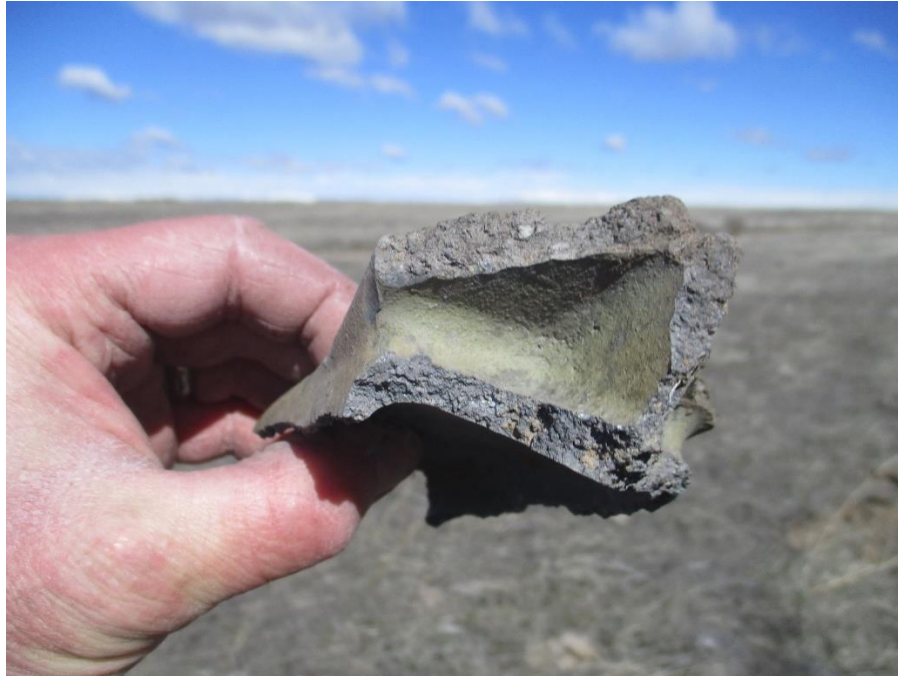
A seat belt buckle



A bomb arming switch



The safety wire on this piece is still intact after impacting the ground 76 years ago



A piece of heavy cast aluminum, probably from an engine



This piece of aluminum skin was found a quarter mile from the impact site



An oxygen regulator





Some of the larger pieces of wreckage



Lt. Gayle Madison (Courtesy of the Madison family)



Lt. Sammy West (Courtesy of 461st.org)



Sgt. Leonard Slayton (Courtesy of 461st.org)



(Left to right) Sgt. John Householder, Sgt. John Wick, and Pfc. Joseph Brlansky stand in front of B-24H #41-28717 "Big Stinky" at Torretta, Italy, in early 1944. The bomber's skunk nose art is visible behind them. After surviving the training accident at Mountain Home they, along with Lt. Sammy West and Sgt. Leonard Slayton, were shot down over Albania on 4/24/44 while on a bombing mission in "Big Stinky". Wick was lost at sea and the other four men were captured and held as POW's until May 1945. (Courtesy of 461st.org)

