

Boeing B-17G #42-31541

December 23, 1943

On the morning of December 23, 1943, six B-17 bombers with the 748th Bomb Squadron (457th Bomb Group) were participating in a formation flying practice mission near Wendover Army Air Base, Utah. While flying at 6000 ft., B-17G serial number 42-31541 accidentally under-ran and pulled up into the aircraft above it. The two port propellers of the aircraft it struck sawed the tail off of #541. The stricken bomber went out of control and hit the ground in a vertical dive several miles from the base, killing all eight crewmen. The other aircraft was able to make an emergency landing at the base with only the two starboard engines running. Special thanks to Craig Fuller for help with locating this crash site. Site visited on 6/9/26.

Crew:

2Lt. William R. Snow	Pilot	Ft. Worth, TX
2Lt. Dwight T. Sullivan	Co-Pilot	Grand Forks, ND
2Lt. Robert F. Oberfelder	Navigator	New Rochelle, NY
2Lt. Earl F. Saucer	Bombardier	Oregon, MO
S/Sgt. Vernon L. Cummings	Engineer / Gunner	Carrollton, OH
Sgt. Morris H. Strong	Engineer/ Gunner	San Francisco, CA
S/Sgt. Edwin A. Liesinger	Radio / Gunner	Humboldt, SD
Sgt. James A. Hennings, Jr.	Gunner	Kansas City, MO



Part of an oxygen bottle



Structural aluminum



Part of a self-sealing fuel tank



Flattened large diameter aluminum tubing



Badly corroded aluminum stringer on the salt flats



A geared engine part



Part of a flexible ammunition chute



Multiple layers of riveted aluminum



U.S. flag at the impact site



A small handle with the Boeing name stamped on it



2Lt. William R. Snow, pilot



2Lt. Robert F. Oberfelder, navigator



2Lt. Earl F. Saucer, bombardier



S/Sgt. Vernon L. Cummings, engineer / gunner



Sgt. Morris H. Strong, engineer / gunner



S/Sgt. Edwin A. Liesinger, radio / gunner



A Boeing B-17G similar to #42-31541 (USAAF photo)