

Project Remembrance - TBM crash site visit near Payson AZ.

Only a few miles from where Gloria and I were staying (Kohl's Ranch Resort) Craig Fuller shared with me the coordinates of a known crash site.

On June 15, 1961 a converted WWII, TBM Avenger, fire bomber, crashed on a ridge killing the pilot Mr. Charles (Chuck) Cochrane. R.I.P.

Location: @ 12-mile East of Payson and South of Forest Road 405.

This was a civilian firefighting aircraft under contract with the USFS.

Mr. Cochrane was fighting the "Roberts Fire" at the time of the accident. (See photo of brass plaque, 1st name listed).

Craig shared this information with me: "Large pieces remained until the early eighties when the aluminum was salvaged. The engine and some small pieces still remain at the site."

Gloria and I did a recon drive to the area to investigate the various access points which Craig had suggested. All access points would require I go alone and leave Gloria somewhere. Not a good plan.

I started asking around to find a hike partner and finally located one through the Payson Historical Society Museum.

I was fortunate to be referred to a Mr. Chuck Jacobs who is the retired Payson City Fire Chief and who also ran Jeep tours of the area until just recently.

Chuck Jacobs is a wealth of local historical knowledge and when I told him about this crash site he was very interested in visiting it.

We arranged a meeting time and planned our approach.

Temps were cool, which was stroke of luck for us.

We were able to find the site with only a few minor detours.

The Manzanita brush was thick and viability was limited.

Thanks again to Craig for the accurate GPS #'s!

When we were on the actual crash site, the sky opened up and were soaked by a short rain shower accompanied by a flash of lightning and a very loud peal of thunder.

Were heavens shedding tears for the pilot and warning us to look-but-not-take anything, perhaps?

The engine was there and it is a huge engine.

Two sections of the wings with the landing gear were still there as well as the prop hub.

Also, hundreds of smaller parts and fragments were scattered about.

This is still a very amazing and size-able site.

Part numbers were found however, no data plates were located.

We took some photo and respectfully retreated back down the mountain to our vehicles.

Photos below show the Wild-land Firefighter Memorial statue and plaque, the remaining wreckage and two photos of my fellow explorer-adventurer Mr. Chuck Jacobs (Payson Fire Chief, ret.) Many thanks to Chuck for being willing to accompany me to this historic site.



FIREFIIGHTERS
 who made the
 ultimate sacrifice
 to protect our magnificent
 Mogollon Rim Country

DATE	FIRE NAME	VICTIMS NAME	REMARKS
6/15/61	Roberts	Chuck Cochane	Pilot TBM Air Tanker
6/21/61	Hatchery	Constantine (Corky) Koda	Forest Service E Aircraft Crash
6/21/61	Hatchery	Arthur G. Goodnow	Pilot Aircraft Crash
7/10/89	Horton	Emle Cochini	Zuni Fire Crew Struck by Lightning
6/19/60	Bude	Sandra J. Bachman	Perryville Crew Burned over
6/20/60	Bude	James E. Ellis	Perryville Crew Burned over
6/20/60	Bude	Joseph L. Chacon	Perryville Crew Burned over
6/20/60	Bude	Max S. Contreras	Perryville Crew Burned over

10/18/2017















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