On October 5, 1944, B-24D #42-40859 took off from Mountain Home Army Air Field, Idaho, at 4:22pm for a formation flying training mission. The aircraft was with Section II of the 213th CCTS. Immediately after leaving the runway, the gunners in the rear of the bomber reported a large fuel leak from #2 engine. The pilot shut it down, feathered the propeller, and increased power to the other three engines. #1 engine then suffered a runaway propeller and failed to respond to control inputs. The fully-loaded aircraft couldn't maintain altitude, and it became difficult to control. The pilot decided to belly-land in the desert a few miles west of the airfield. As the bomber ground to a stop, fire broke out in #3 engine, all seven crewmen quickly exited and retreated to safety behind a nearby hill, after which it exploded and burned. USAAF removed the remaining large pieces and buried the rest. Site visited 3/20/18.

Crew:

Pilot: 2Lt. Robert E. Gilbert
Co-Pilot: 2Lt. George J. Weaver, Jr.
Navigator: 2Lt. Jospehf F. Schwab
Engineer: Cpl. James E. McLaughlin
Radio Operator: Cpl. Anthony J. Schwind
Ball Turret Gunner: Cpl. Einar A. Adresen
Top Turret Gunner: Cpl. Colin J. Mayne

Back Row (Left to Right): Weaver, Gilbert, Schwab. Front Row (Left to Right): McLaughlin, Adresen, Wiederspan, Cummings, Mayne, Schwind.

Nose gunner Wiederspan and tail gunner Cummings were not on board the B-24D at the time of the accident. Photo courtesy of Bruce Andresen.
Corporal Einar A. Andresen, from Chicago, Illinois. Photo courtesy of his son, Bruce Andresen.