

B-17E crash site near Magdalena, NM

DATE October 15, 1942

AIRCRAFT B-17E, A.F. No. 41-9161

GENERAL LOCATION North Baldy Mountain near Magdalena

PEOPLE ABOARD Crew of nine

REFERENCES *El Defensor Chieftain* newspaper, Socorro, NM, article by Paul Harden. *The Last flight of B-17 No. 9161*

HISTORY

At sundown, October 15, 1942, the subject airplane departed Alamogordo AAF for regular night flight training. The crew was making simulated bombing runs at various target sites in New Mexico. Their last target was from the northeast on the airstrip northeast of Magdalena. The "bombing run" was made from only 700 feet altitude. After the first run, the plane circled over the village and made another pass on the target and then started to climb out over North Baldy Peak on a southeast heading. After clearing the peak, they were going to go back to Alamogordo. However, the plane crashed below the top of the peak and burst into flames. The entire crew of nine perished.

At the time, there was only a horse trail to the site. That made recovery operations slow and difficult, so after the bodies, the bomb sight and the tail machine gun were recovered, much of the plane remained. Over the years, a road to the scene was built to support local mining operations and local scavengers recovered most plane parts. Many crash explorers still visit the site and find parts spread south of the impact location and in a brushy canyon downhill from the end of the road.



Photo of a similar type of Boeing B-17E aircraft