

## C-117A crash site east of Placitas, NM

DATE April 26, 1963

AIRCRAFT C-117A (sometimes referred to as a C-47), A.F. No. 45-2545

GENERAL LOCATION Private property just north of Cibola National Forest boundary

PEOPLE ABOARD Four crew members including one Aircraft Commander, two Co-Pilots and a Flight Engineer; and five military passengers

REFERENCES Official USAF ACCIDENT /INCIDENT REPORT No. 63-4-26-1, several *Albuquerque Journal* and *Albuquerque Tribune* newspaper articles, landowner interviews, and other interviews with local residents

### HISTORY

On the morning of April 25, 1963, the aircraft departed Andrews AFB, MD, for an S-8 proficiency flight mission. The intention was to fly to March AFB, CA, with stops at Wright-Patterson AFB, OH, for refueling and on to Lowry AFB, CO, to spend the night, before proceeding to the west coast. There were four crew members aboard. On the morning of April 26, 1963, the plane took off from Lowry with the four-person crew plus five military "hitch-hikers." En route to March AFB, unexpectedly hazardous weather conditions occurred, causing a flight plan deviation. After reaching the greater Albuquerque-Placitas area, weather conditions were so bad that the plane lost a wing and crashed into the ground. The crash occurred at approximately 0959 MST. All nine people aboard perished in the crash. The site was investigated by Air Force, FBI and State Police personnel and later thoroughly salvaged. Local people report that the remaining debris was buried by using a bulldozer.

After getting landowner permission, on March 10, 2007, crash explorers investigated the site and found very little debris. However, a most telling artifact was a small object that had the aircraft serial number stamped on it. It is assumed this was a plate used to remind a crew member using a radio what the plane's call-sign was. The crash explorers did not search for the detached wing that allegedly fell into the nearby national forest.



Photo of a similar C-47/C-117A type aircraft