



Photo of a similar C-47 aircraft

C-47B crash site, Sandia Mountains, NM

DATE November 16, 1944

AIRCRAFT USAAF C-47B, AAF S/N 43-49365

GENERAL LOCATION Northeastern Sandia Mountains, NM

PEOPLE ABOARD USAAF Pilot, ten military passengers and one civilian

REFERENCES Official AAF Accident Report for above aircraft; articles from newspapers in Albuquerque, NM, and Wichita, KS; and information from crash survivors and relatives

HISTORY

The pilot was the USAAF representative at the Beechcraft Aviation plant in Wichita, Kansas. He scheduled a flight to Long Beach, California, to pick up needed parts for aircraft manufacture at the Wichita plant. He allowed ten military servicemen and a civilian to fly with him to California. After taking off, he proceeded on what many pilots have referred to as a "scud run" to his destination. He had filed for a non-stop flight to his destination, but deteriorating weather slowed the flight down and the pilot decided to land in Albuquerque. The plane encountered blizzard conditions northeast of the airport and crashed into the Sandia Mountains.

The pilot and three other military men died on impact and two others and the civilian died by the following morning. The five survivors weathered the storm for three nights and when the weather cleared, two of the least injured passengers walked out to Placitas, NM. They called for help and all were subsequently rescued. The plane was mostly salvaged by a private party after the war.

In 2002, crash explorers questioned the salvager and re-discovered the crash site. They later led relatives of the crash victims to the site in 2004, sixty years after the accident.