

Visit to F-104C Crash Site west of Belen, NM

DATE January 3, 1969

AIRCRAFT F-104C, USAF S/N 56-889

GENERAL LOCATION NNW of Alexander Municipal Airport, Belen, NM

PEOPLE ABOARD USAF Pilot

REFERENCES USAF Accident/Incident Report No. 69-1-3-1

HISTORY

This historical information was extracted and summarized from the official USAF accident report. Refer to that document for more details.

The crash occurred at 1508 hours MST. The pilot was flying in the area on a formation training mission with another USAF pilot flying another F-104. After completing a high-G 180-degree turn west of Belen near the Alexander Municipal Airport, aircraft No. 56-889 developed control problems and impacted the ground. It scraped along the surface for “approximately 500 feet” before again becoming airborne and finally hitting the ground “in a nose high attitude approximately nine-tenths of a mile from the first impact point.” Before the second impact, the pilot safely ejected from the aircraft. The crash was largely cleared up after the event.

On June 14, 2009, several aviation crash explorers visited the area and found crash debris. Serial numbers on two aircraft parts identified them as belonging to an F-104. That information, in conjunction with the crash description and a map in the USAF report, provided almost 100% assurances that the debris was that of the subject aircraft.



Photo of similar Lockheed F-104C's in flight