

REPORT OF AF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

Use this form in accordance with AF Reg. 62-14 and AF Manual 62-5, "Aircraft Accident Investigators' Handbook." Fill in all spaces applicable. If additional space is needed, use additional sheet(s) and identify by proper section letter and subsection number.

85141

Section A—GENERAL INFORMATION

8540-H

1. PLACE OF ACCIDENT: State, county, nearest town—Distance and direction to accident: Texas, El Paso, El Paso 2.5 mi. North		2. NEAREST AIRPORT Suitable for landing this plane—Distance and direction to accident: Biggs Air Force Base, Texas 6.2 mi. WSW	
3. ELEVATION ABOVE S. L. at accident scene 5200 MSL	4. DATE OF ACCIDENT 11 Dec 53	5. HOUR AND TIME ZONE 1437 MST	6. ☒ DAY ☐ NIGHT ☐ DAWN ☐ DUSK
7. LIST NUMBERS OF ALL OTHER AIRCRAFT INVOLVED: (File separate Form 14 for each aircraft) None		8. ☒ INCIDENT TO FLIGHT ☐ NOT INCIDENT TO FLIGHT	
9. CLASSIFICATION OF ACCIDENT: ☒ Major ☐ Minor	10. CLEARANCE: ☒ IFR ☐ Local ☐ VFR ☐ Other	11. THIS WAS A: ☐ CAP FLIGHT ☐ AIR RESERVE FLIGHT ☐ ANG FLIGHT ☒ OTHER	
12. AIRFIELD OF LAST TAKEOFF Carswell AFB, Tex		13. DURATION OF FLIGHT SINCE LAST TAKEOFF 3:22	
14. MISSION OF FLIGHT (Use Form 14) S-3		15. ACTIVITY AIRCRAFT WAS ENGAGED IN JUST PRIOR TO ACCIDENT Attempting approach to Biggs AFB, Texas	

Section B—AIRCRAFT

1. AIRCRAFT NO. 44-92071A	2. TYPE, MODEL, SERIES AND FLOCK NO. B-36D-3	3. ORGANIZATION REPORTING AIRCRAFT ON AF-119 REPORT MAJOR COMMAND SAC SAC SUBCOMMAND 8th AF AF WING 7th Bomb Wing (H)	
4. TECHNICAL ORDERS affecting this aircraft were not complied with at time of accident. (List number and title of these T. O.'s on separate sheet.)		GROUP NUMBER AND TYPE -	SQUADRON 492nd BSqdn BASE Carswell AFB, Texas

Section C—OPERATOR (Person at controls at time of accident)

1. LAST NAME (Gr., II, etc.) Gerick,	FIRST NAME Herman	MIDDLE NAME (NMI)	GRADE Lt. Col.	COMPONENT AFRes	SERIAL NO. AO-725281	NATIONALITY AND RACE US White	YEAR OF BIRTH 1918
2. ASSIGNED BASE Carswell AFB, Tex	MAJOR COMMAND SAC	SUBCOMMAND 8th AF	AF WING 7th B.Wg. (H)	GROUP NO. AND TYPE -	SQUADRON OR UNIT 492nd B.Sqdn		
3. ATTACHED BASE FOR FLYING - 8551	MAJOR COMMAND - SAC	SUBCOMMAND - 8	AF WING BH	GROUP NO. AND TYPE -	SQUADRON OR UNIT BH		
4. ORIGINAL AERONAUTICAL RATING AND DATE RECEIVED Pilot 21 May 1942		5. PRESENT AERONAUTICAL RATING AND DATE RECEIVED Sr/Plt 1 June 1949		6. PRIMARY DUTY ASSIGNMENT B-36 Aircraft Commander			
OPERATOR'S FLYING EXPERIENCE (Including Civilian)							
7. TYPE OF INSTRUMENT CARD Green		EXPIRATION DATE 2 Dec 54					
8. TOTAL PILOT (As Pilot, Copilot, Command Pilot, etc.) HOURS 5500:45		17. LIST BY TYPE AND MODEL 1ST PILOT EXPERIENCE IN SIMILAR AIRCRAFT (e. g., B-26, 50 hrs.) C-54: 207; B-17: 159 B-29: 139; B-24: 38					
9. TOTAL 1ST PILOT HOURS Incl A/C & IP 941 4559:55		18. WAS OPERATOR ON INSTRUMENTS AT TIME OF ACCIDENT OR IMMEDIATELY BEFORE? ☐ No ☐ UNK ☒ YES: ☐ HOOD ☐ WEATHER If above answer is "Yes" or if accident occurred at night or during IFR weather or unknown conditions, fill in items below.					
10. 1ST PILOT HOURS LAST 90 DAYS Incl A/C & IP 203:15		19. TOTAL 1ST PILOT INSTRUMENT WEATHER HOURS 288:30					
11. 1ST PILOT HOURS LAST 30 DAYS Incl A/C & IP 72:50		20. TOTAL 1ST PILOT INSTRUMENT HOOD HOURS 16:15					
12. 1ST PILOT HOURS THIS MODEL (B-25, F-51, etc.) B-36 2185:55		21. 1ST PILOT INSTRUMENT (Weather and Hood) HOURS LAST 6 MONTHS 24:15					
13. OTHER PILOT HOURS (OP, O, SC) THIS MODEL CP 386:00		22. 1ST PILOT INSTRUMENT (Weather and Hood) HOURS LAST 90 DAYS 8:15					
14. 1ST PILOT HOURS LAST 90 DAYS THIS MODEL 203:15		23. 1ST PILOT NIGHT HOURS LAST 6 MONTHS 80:15					
15. 1ST PILOT HOURS LAST 30 DAYS THIS MODEL 72:50		24. 1ST PILOT NIGHT HOURS THIS MODEL LAST 90 DAYS 36:15					
16. TOTAL TIME SPENT IN AIR DURING 24 HRS. PRIOR TO ACCIDENT 12:50							

Section D—PERSONNEL INVOLVED (Including operator and all other persons, whether in plane or not)

Duty at time of accident	NAME (Last name first)	Type of Rating (Symbol)	SERIAL NO.	GRADE AND BRANCH OF SERVICE	COMPONENT (See AFM 62-5)	ORGANIZATIONAL ASSIGNMENT—Command, Subcommand, Group Number and Type, Base	Fatal, Major, Minor, Missing	Parachute Used
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9) Yes (10) No
A/C	Gerick, Herman (NMI)	Plt	A0725281	Lt/Col USAF	AFRes	SAC, 8th AF, 7th BWG	Fatal	X
Plt	Morford, George C.	Plt	13566A	Major USAF	RegAF	492BSq, Carswell AFB	Fatal	X
Nat Miner	Douglas P.	AO	A0673860	Major USAF	AFRes	" " " "	Fatal	X
FE	Harvey, James M., Jr.	AO	A0223069781	Lt. USAF	AFRes	" " " "	Fatal	X
FE	Fant, Cary B., Jr.	AO	A05575098	Lt. USAF	AFRes	" " " "	Fatal	X
RO	Freeman, Royal (NMI)	None	AAF18267827	T/Sgt USAF	RegAF	" " " "	Fatal	X
G	Howe, Edwin D.	None	AAF12368695A	1C USAF	RegAF	" " " "	Fatal	X
G	Silvestri, Frank (NMI)	None	AAF13415655A	2C USAF	RegAF	" " " "	Fatal	X
X	Taliaferro, Dewey (NMI)	None	AAF6951715	T/Sgt USAF	RegAF	" " " "	Fatal	X

SPECIAL HANDLING REQUIRED

RESTRICTED (WHEN FILLED IN)

Section E—RATED PERSONNEL AT OTHER SET OF DUAL CONTROLS (Instructor, Copilot, etc.)

1. LAST NAME (Jr., II, etc.) MORFORD,	FIRST NAME GEORGE	MIDDLE NAME CLAYTON	GRADE Major	COMPONENT RegAF	SERIAL NO. 13566A	NATIONALITY AND RACE US White	YEAR OF BIRTH 1920
2. ASSIGNED BASE Carewell AFB, Tex	MAJOR COMMAND SAC	SUBCOMMAND 8thAF	AF WING 7th BWg (H)	GROUP NO. AND TYPE -	SQUADRON OR UNIT 492nd BSqdn		
3. ATTACHED BASE FOR FLYING -	MAJOR COMMAND -	SUBCOMMAND -	AF WING -	GROUP NO. AND TYPE -	SQUADRON OR UNIT -		

4. ORIGINAL AERONAUTICAL RATING AND DATE RECEIVED

Pilot 20 May 1943

5. PRESENT AERONAUTICAL RATING AND DATE RECEIVED

Pilot 20 May 1943

6. PRIMARY DUTY ASSIGNMENT

B-36 1st Pilot

FLYING EXPERIENCE (Including Civilian)

7. TYPE OF INSTRUMENT CARD **Green** EXPIRATION DATE **21 Feb 54**8. TOTAL PILOT (1st Pilot, Copilot, Command Pilot, etc.) HOURS **4198:15**9. TOTAL 1ST PILOT HOURS Incl A/C & IP **2571:05**10. TOTAL HOURS, ☐ IP ☒ CP ☐ C (Check applicable one) **1403:10**11. PILOT HOURS LAST 90 DAYS **8:40**12. 1ST PILOT HOURS LAST 90 DAYS Incl A/C **68:30**13. HOURS LAST 90 DAYS, ☐ IP ☒ CP ☐ C **16:10**14. PILOT HOURS LAST 30 DAYS **6:25**15. TOTAL PILOT HOURS THIS MODEL (B-26, F-51, etc.) **B-36 1258:15**16. 1ST PILOT HOURS THIS MODEL Incl A/C **857:05**17. HOURS THIS MODEL, ☐ IP ☒ CP ☐ C **401:10**18. TOTAL PILOT HOURS THIS MODEL LAST 90 DAYS **8:40**19. 1ST PILOT HOURS THIS MODEL LAST 90 DAYS **68:30**20. HOURS THIS MODEL LAST 90 DAYS, ☐ IP ☒ CP ☐ C **16:10**21. LIST BY TYPE AND MODEL: ☐ IP ☒ CP ☐ C C-54: 326;
EXPERIENCE IN SIMILAR AIRCRAFT (e.g., B-26, IP, 60 hrs.) B-17: 30

B-29: 10; B-24: 21

Fill in items below if Instrument and Night Experience of Operator was listed in Section C

22. TOTAL 1ST PILOT INSTRUMENT WEATHER HOURS **235:30**23. TOTAL 1ST PILOT INSTRUMENT HOOD HOURS **125:00**24. 1ST PILOT INSTRUMENT (Weather and Hood) HRS. LAST 6 MONTHS **10:30**25. 1ST PILOT INSTRUMENT (Weather and Hood) HRS. LAST 90 DAYS **None**26. TOTAL PILOT NIGHT HOURS LAST 6 MONTHS **53:00**27. 1ST PILOT NIGHT HOURS LAST 6 MONTHS **35:20**28. NIGHT HOURS LAST 6 MOS., ☐ IP ☒ CP ☐ C **17:40**29. TOTAL PILOT NIGHT HOURS THIS MODEL LAST 90 DAYS **None**30. 1ST PILOT NIGHT HOURS THIS MODEL LAST 90 DAYS **None**31. NIGHT HRS. THIS MODEL LAST 90 DAYS, ☐ IP ☒ CP ☐ C **1:00**

Section F—DAMAGE

1. DESCRIBE BRIEFLY IN GENERAL TERMS THE EXTENT OF DAMAGE TO THE AIRPLANE, ENGINES, AND PROPELLERS.

2. CHECK PROPER DAMAGE CLASSIFICATION

NONE

MINOR

SUBSTANTIAL

DESTROYED ☒

Aircraft destroyed by impact, explosion and subsequent fire.

3. ☐ PLANE OR WRECKAGE WAS RETURNED TO AN AF BASE

7. Give below a considered estimate of cost of this accident to the Air Force:

COST OF DAMAGE TO AIRCRAFT \$ **3,426,097.00**4. IS PLANE DAMAGED BEYOND ECONOMIC REPAIR? ☒ Yes ☐ NoCOST OF DAMAGE TO OTHER GOVERNMENT PROPERTY \$ **None**

5. IF PLANE IS TO BE REPAIRED, GIVE ENGINEERING OFFICER'S ESTIMATE OF

COST OF DAMAGE TO PRIVATE PROPERTY \$ **None**COST OF INJURIES \$ **328,260.00**NUMBER OF MAN-HOURS REQUIRED FOR REPAIR: **N/A** MAN-HRS.COST—OTHER (Explain) \$ **None**6. WAS PRIVATE PROPERTY DAMAGED? ☐ Yes ☒ NoTOTAL ESTIMATED COST OF ACCIDENT \$ **3,754,357.00**

If "Yes," DESCRIBE DAMAGES ON SEPARATE SHEET.

Section G—SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

1. Check items of special equipment which affected the accident.

☐ RADIOS ☐ ARMAMENT ☐ DE-ICERS ☐ EQUIPMENT FOR CLEAR VISION FROM COCKPIT
☐ INSTRUMENTS ☐ FIRE EXTINGUISHING EQUIPMENT IN PLANE ☐ JATO

2. DESCRIBE BRIEFLY HOW THE USE, NONUSE, MISUSE, OR ABSENCE OF SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AFFECTED THE ACCIDENT

SPECIAL HANDLING REQUIRED
IAW PROVISIONS PAR. 10A and 52 AFR 62-14
Not applicable

Section H—WEATHER (At time and place of accident)

CLOUDING Est 4000 ft haze	VISIBILITY NNW at 1000	WIND DIRECTION 34	TEMP. 29	DEW POINT 14.5 Obs	OTHER WEATHER CONDITIONS Mtn tops obscured, very lgt snow
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If weather other than unfavorable wind conditions for takeoff, landing, or taxiing was a factor in the accident, attach statement of weather officer describing climatic conditions and how they probably contributed to accident.

Section I—CHECK LIST FOR ATTACHMENTS

☐ FORM I Not available	☒ CLEARANCE	☒ PHOTOGRAPHS	☒ FORM 14C
☒ FORM I Part II & III	☐ CREW MEMBERS' STATEMENTS	☒ FORM 14A	☐ FORM 14D
☒ LIST OF T.O.'S NOT C/W	☒ WITNESSES' STATEMENTS	☒ FORM 14B	☐ FORM 14E

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16-00047-1

Section 0 - DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT

Lt. Col. Herman (NMI) Gerick, and seven members of his regularly assigned Select combat crew (1st Pilot: Major George C. Morford; 1st Navigator: Major Douglas P. Miner; 1st Flight Engineer: 1st Lt. Cary B. Fant, Jr; 1st Radio Operator: M/Sgt. Royal (NMI) Freeman; Gunner: A/1C Edwin D. Howe; Gunner: A/2C Frank (NMI) Silvestri; and the 492nd Bomb Squadron Staff Flight Engineer: 1st Lt. James M. Harvey, Jr., and one passenger: 492nd Bomb Squadron 1st Sgt. Dewey (NMI) Taliaferro were assigned the task of ferrying B-36D aircraft number 44-92071A from Carswell Air Force Base, Fort Worth, Texas, to Biggs Air Force Base, El Paso, Texas.

The flight was cleared under Instrument Flight Rule conditions to proceed from Carswell Air Force Base direct to El Paso, Texas at 16,000 feet. The aircraft was held at Salt Flat Radio for 15 minutes. Departing Salt Flat Radio aircraft was instructed to descend to 15,000 feet and proceed westward on the east leg of the El Paso radio range to the El Paso cone for further instructions. Upon arriving over El Paso radio the aircraft was instructed to proceed to the Clint Homer (located on the southeast leg of the El Paso range, 13½ nautical miles from the cone), descending enroute to an altitude of 9,000 feet, further descend to 8,000 feet in a holding pattern over Clint, then to proceed inbound to the El Paso range, descending enroute. The weather conditions for the El Paso Municipal Airport were then transmitted to the aircraft by the El Paso Radio. The weather report was given as thin obscurement, estimated 2,500 feet overcast, visibility 2 miles, light snow, dust, wind NE at 15 miles per hour, altimeter 30.10. The let down instructions from the El Paso Radio to the Clint Homer, were immediately changed to the following: proceed to the Clint Homer at 15,000 feet and hold for further instructions. After arriving at Clint Homer, the aircraft was then authorized to descend to 8,000 feet in a holding pattern over Clint Homer and proceed inbound to the

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~~IAW PROVISIONS PART 91.103 AND 91.1052 AFR 62-46~~

El Paso radio descending enroute to an altitude of 6,500 feet and stand by for Biggs GCA pickup and radio instructions. The aircraft proceeded from Clint Homer inbound toward the El Paso radio. The initial radar control, by Biggs GCA, was accomplished when the aircraft was at a point nine and one half ($9\frac{1}{2}$) miles southeast of Biggs Air Force Base on a heading of 316 degrees magnetic. At this time Biggs GCA informed El Paso Approach Control that they had the aircraft in radar contact. Approach Control transferred control of the aircraft to Biggs GCA on "G" (Golf) VHF channel at this point.

After the aircraft was turned over to Biggs Air Force Base GCA by the Approach Controller at Municipal Airport tower, the Aircraft Landing Control Technician, A/LC Roberts, Eugene M., plotted the aircraft position as 9 miles SSE of Biggs Air Force Base and the aircraft gave the information that he was passing through 6,900 feet descending on a heading of 318 degrees. Emergency procedures were then given by the GCA controller as follows: "If you lose radio contact with GCA for a period of one minute in the pattern or five seconds on final, re-home on the El Paso radio range at 5,500 feet, contact El Paso Approach Control on channel "B" for further instructions." The pilot repeated the instructions.

The GCA controller then turned the aircraft to the left to a heading of 260 degrees, continuing his descent to 5,500 feet, and advised this would be his base leg. Biggs GCA utilized this turn as the identifying turn. At this time the winds and altimeter settings were given as NNW at 14 knots, altimeter setting 30.12, which was acknowledged by the aircraft. GCA then notified the aircraft that this would be a PPI assist to runway 35 to the north, length 7500 feet, width 150 feet, field elevation 3937 MSL, GCA minimums 4437 feet, which was acknowledged.

Aircraft was told to turn to a heading of 350 degrees maintaining an altitude of 5000 feet. The transmission was acknowledged. This was given

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LAW PROVISIONS

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at about one and one half ($1\frac{1}{2}$) miles east of the extension of the runway center line. At this point the Final Controller, S/Sgt. McPeters, Julius M., took over and advised the aircraft that he was overshooting the turn and to turn to 010 degrees and asked how the aircraft was reading the Final Controller, but the aircraft did not reply. The Final Controller made one more call with no reply. He turned to the Traffic Director, A/IC Roberts, and asked him to call the aircraft and turn him 20 degrees right. A/IC Roberts called the aircraft and told him to turn to a heading of 370 degrees, the pilot came back and said "370 degrees, there is no such heading". According to all three GCA operators, A/IC Roberts immediately said "correction, turn right to a heading of 010 degrees", which they maintain the aircraft acknowledged. At this point Mr. Howard P. Earl, Air Traffic Controller at El Paso Municipal testified that he was listening to the conversation and that the pilot continued his transmission for a period of two minutes, to the effect that he was continuing right to a heading of 270 degrees, and that Mr Earl heard no correction given by GCA. However, other personnel in the Municipal Tower only heard the "370 degrees, there is no such heading". It was necessary for the Investigation Board to evaluate Mr. Earl's testimony to segregate facts from opinions. He admittedly did not hear all transmissions yet tended to elaborate and exaggerate what he did hear. He was inclined to theorize and confuse facts with opinions.

After the above transmissions the aircraft informed GCA that he desired to make a visual approach over the station at 4500 feet. Biggs tower was notified by GCA of the request and GCA stated that Approach Control had approved visual approach. The aircraft was observed at about this point on the scope to be making a right turn and was visually observed by a tower operator at Municipal and by an operator in Biggs tower to be making a

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IAW PROVISIONS 49 USC 461 and 52 AFR 32-148

right turn to an easterly heading at a point half way between the two stations, or about one and one half (1½) miles south of Biggs Air Force Base. 1st Lt. Ray Smith, Jr., pilot on the Standardization Board Crew of the 341st Squadron of the 97th Bomb Wing (M), also observed the aircraft at about the same time and location. He observed the aircraft make a sharp 45 degree turn to the right over Municipal, level out for about one minute, and then make another sharp 45 degree turn to the right to a south easterly heading. This bears out a theory that the pilot saw Municipal Airfield and might have thought it was Biggs Air Force Base. He never did reach the southern boundary of Biggs Air Force Base, but made his turns over, or having passed just beyond, the Municipal Airport. From observations it is evident that the aircraft's northerly heading, as cited above, was west of the extension of Biggs Air Force Base runway 35 and slightly to the east of the north-south runway at Municipal Airport.

Some place throughout this sequence of transmissions, two Municipal tower operators said they heard the aircraft ask GCA if he had them in his scope. GCA does not recall any such transmissions and Municipal tower operators cannot pinpoint the time or place in the sequence of transmissions they heard.

GCA continued to monitor the aircraft and when its turn was approaching the extension of the center line of runway 35, GCA advised aircraft that a right turn to heading 350 degrees should bring him over the station. This call was acknowledged but as the aircraft was drifting to the west on the scope, a correction was given to turn further right to a heading of 010 degrees. Aircraft acknowledged but was not observed in the scope to be making good the desired heading. Aircraft was then advised to turn further right to heading 030 degrees which aircraft acknowledged. At this

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IAW PROVISIONS PAR 4-1-1 52 AFR 62-14 927-9

time GCA (PPI) asked aircraft his present altitude. Aircraft reported 5,000 feet. GCA then advised aircraft of location of the Franklin Mountains in relation to the aircraft's position, which was four and one half ($4\frac{1}{2}$) miles SSW of the mountains, height 7,176 feet, and advised aircraft to climb to 8,000 feet. The aircraft acknowledged. A/IC Roberts contacted El Paso Approach Control to obtain clearance for the 8,000 feet altitude. At this point the GCA operators estimate the aircraft was about four and one half ($4\frac{1}{2}$) miles south of the mountains. GCA continued calling aircraft but received no reply. However, the aircraft was observed in the scope for about four and one half ($4\frac{1}{2}$) miles further before it disappeared in ground cluttered on the scope. The aircraft crashed at approximately 1437 MST, or three hours and twenty-two minutes (3:22) after take-off. Shortly thereafter, telephone calls to Biggs Air Force Base and El Paso Municipal were received that an aircraft had crashed into the west side of the Franklin Mountains. Smoke could be observed rising above the mountain top from both locations.

Telephone calls from civilians in El Paso who had observed the aircraft passing overhead began coming in. Observations from these civilians located the aircraft over the city on a northerly heading at about 5,300 feet, disappearing into clouds covering the mountain tops. In one case a Mr. Vernon took a picture of the aircraft. Photo analysis indicates that the aircraft was at about 5,300 feet, heading about 350 degrees in about a ten (10) degrees bank to the right. Landing gear and flaps were in the retracted position. Power setting on the conventional engines sounded to the observers as though they were in a cruise position. The jets were not on. This observation is borne out by a study of the wreckage from which it was determined that the gear was retracted, jets were off and power

~~IAW PROVISIONS~~ SPECIAL HANDLING REQUIRED

52 AFR 62-7410

settings on reciprocating engines were in cruise position.

The course indicated by the observers on the ground and the track plotted by the GCA radar very nearly coincide. The aircraft crashed into the west side of the Franklin Mountains at an elevation determined to be 5,200 feet while on a heading of between 360 degrees and 010 degrees at a point six and two tenths (6.2) miles and a true bearing of 256 degrees from Biggs Tower. The initial point of impact was by the right wing tip and the right wing began disintegration as more of the wing made contact with the mountain slope. The aircraft struck a ridge between two small ravines with part of it remaining and burning there and the rest projecting on into a sheer cliff where it burned. The entire path from point of initial impact to the cliff is about 675 feet. There were no survivors and the aircraft exploded and was completely destroyed, fire resulting from the crash.

In reconstructing the sequence of events the board feels that as a result of an attempt to expedite airway traffic, El Paso Approach Control turned the aircraft over, and GCA picked the aircraft up, at a point between Clint Homer and El Paso low frequency radio which precluded proper airspeed and airplane configuration for a landing on the initial approach to Biggs Air Force Base. The board feels that this was improper utilization of airways facilities.

The board feels that in passing over El Paso Municipal, the pilot may have observed El Paso Municipal thinking it was Biggs Air Force Base, as he turned after passing over the former and never did pass over Biggs Air Force Base. With GCA giving him headings that did not coincide with his interpretation of what he could observe on the ground, he may have become confused and apprehensive of GCA instruction. Why he proceeded in westerly direction after the turn to the south from over Municipal Airport, or why

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IAW PROVISIONS OF 48 CFR 101-11.52 AFR 69-44-11

he did not follow the instructions given for emergency in case of communication failure, is not known. Weather at Biggs Air Force Base at the time of the accident was estimated 4000 foot overcast and two (2) miles visibility, with very light snow and haze, with the mountain tops obscured. El Paso Municipal at the same time had weather of measured ceiling 3,300 feet with two miles visibility.

The Board feels that the primary cause of the accident was improper operation on authorized instrument flight because the pilot did not follow headings which the GCA operators testified under oath were given to the aircraft. Even if the pilot did not receive some of these transmissions, then the flight time was such that a one minute time interval would have elapsed. The pilot should have followed emergency instructions and re-homed to the El Paso radio range at 5500 feet. Tests run by another B-36 the following day indicated that this maneuver could have been accomplished utilizing the same flight path followed by the crashed B-36, within five and one half miles from actual point of impact with the mountain.

Although the 492nd Bomb Squadron Commander testified that he discussed the ferry flight with the pilot, Lt Col Gerick, in his office, the actual crew briefing took place in a hangar with only the crew present, therefore, the amount of preparation is not known. If the Board's opinion is valid that the pilot became confused by sighting El Paso Municipal instead of Biggs Air Force Base and then flew his aircraft in a wide sweeping turn to the west and north, it must be assumed that sufficient study, familiarization and preparation for flight into the area was not made. Such study and familiarization would have precluded the ensuing confusion. The pilot evidently anticipated weather conditions because he made the statement to the weather forecaster that if he were going to Biggs, it looked as

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LAW PROVISIONS 49 CFR 17.107 and 52 AFR 62-14

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though he would need an alternate:

Blower motor brushes from the RT-124 unit of the APS-23 radar were examined and gave no indication that the motor was operating at the time of the crash. This evidence was insufficient to definitely establish whether or not the radar set was operating, but appearances are that the set was on standby. It was testified that the set was operational before the flight. As it was completely capable of portraying the mountain area, it is assumed that either the set was not on or was not being utilized in compliance with 8th Air Force Regulation 51-3, dated 5 August 1953.

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~~AW PROVISIONS PARS 49A and 52 AFR 62-14~~