

WHERE TWO U. S. ARMY BOMBERS CARRIED ELEVEN TO DEATH IN COLLISION OVER QUEENS RESIDENTIAL SECTION



Mayor La Guardia at the scene of the accident

Times Wide World

11 KILLED IN CRASH OF 2 BOMBERS HERE

Army Planes From Mitchell Field Lock Wings, Plunge in Flames in Queens

BOTH CREWS WIPED OUT

Two Homes Are Set Afire, Woman in One of Them Being Critically Burned

Two United States Army bombers from Mitchell Field locked wings in the air over Bellerose, Queens, at 8:49 o'clock yesterday morning and crashed to earth, killing their crews of eleven officers and enlisted men. They plummeted to the streets of a suburban development, as completely wrecked as if they had been hit by anti-aircraft fire.

One of the planes, the B-18A-43, crashed into 23rd Street between Eighty-sixth and Eighty-seventh Avenues, with three of its crew of five thrown clear of the flaming wreckage. The other, the B-18A-9, burst into flames in the dirt in the front yard of the house occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Rangs at 239-2, Eighty-seventh Avenue.

Flaming gasoline sprayed the Rangs house, setting it afire and also the neighboring house occupied by Mrs. Emily Kraft at 239-26 Eighty-seventh Avenue. Mrs. Kraft was critically burned. Her house was completely uninhabitable, gutted by fire and with one wall bulging until it was shored up to prevent it from falling.

Three of the crew of this plane were tossed into the driveway between the two houses, their clothes aflame. Their bodies twisted and broken as they landed in front of the garage. The other three members of the crew were burned to death in their stricken ship. None of the eleven had a chance.

The ships had taken off from Mitchell Field at 8:15 o'clock on a routine tactical training flight, part of the work being given to the reserve officers who had finished their primary flight training at Kelly Field in Texas. There were eight in the formation, flying in echelon in a diamond-shaped formation at different altitudes.

There was no witness to tell the story, it is assumed that the student pilots were at the controls. The formation was in the air for a few minutes when a change of position in the formation, according to witnesses who do not agree as to the position in the formation, partly caused the angle of observation differed. However, all agree that two planes were in the air.

There was a "ball of flame" then smoke, and the two planes flared out to the ground like sparks shot out of a light. The noise of the crash, roar of flaming gasoline, the pillars of black smoke caused confusion over a wide area in Queens.

Among the first there was Mayor La Guardia, who was driven from Summer City Hall in a radio car by Patrolman Thomas Pugh, who had driven him from his summer home in Northport. Inspector John E. Copeland was taking a walk on Jamaica Avenue near 240th Street when he hurried to the scene as soon as he saw the accident in the air.

When plane No. 45 dropped like a bomb into the yard in front of the house, it was seen as it crashed into the yard in Eighty-seventh Avenue and set fire to the houses, neighbors rushed to the scene, though even then it was apparent that the men must be dead.

Mrs. Kraft, whose house front was drenched with burning gasoline, had sent her two daughters, Helen and Ruth, to school after her husband and a boarder had gone to work earlier. She ran through the flames out a side door with her clothing aflame. Neighbors smothered the flames and Patrolman Peter Kogel, who arrived shortly after the crash, saw her body with olive oil, borrowed blankets and then hurried a car to take her to Creedmoor Hospital, a few blocks away.

She was rushed to an operating room where the doctor in charge waved away a patient who was being brought in for an operation and treated her immediately. Her legs, arms and chest were severely burned. Later she was taken to the Queens General Hospital, where it was said that her condition was critical.

The Victims

The eleven United States Army officers and men who were killed in the crash of two bombing planes in Bellerose, Queens, yesterday were identified at Mitchell Field, L. I., as follows:

First Lieut. PAUL BURLINGAME, 31 years old, United States Army Air Corps; pilot. Married. Home, Louisville, Ky. Residence, Mitchell Field.

Second Lieut. RICHARD M. BYLANDER, 25, United States Army Air Corps Reserve; pilot. Unmarried. Home, Little Rock, Ark. Residence, 18 Whittier Street, Westbury, L. I.

Second Lieut. JAMES FREDERICK DOW, 27, Air Corps Reserve; student pilot. Married. Home, Houston, Mo. Residence, Mitchell Field.

Second Lieut. HUGH PALMER BEDIENT, 25, Air Corps Reserve; student pilot. Married. Home, Falconer, N. Y. Residence, 59 Exeter Street, Williamston Park, L. I.

Second Lieut. PAUL MOFFETT LAMBERT, 26, Air Corps Reserve; student pilot. Unmarried. Home, Newton Highlands, Mass. Residence, Mitchell Field.

Second Lieut. JAMES HERBERT HALL, 25, Air Corps Reserve; student pilot. Married. Home, Lawrenceville, Ga. Residence, Mitchell Field.

Staff Sergeant MARTIN J. COSTELLO, 24, Unmarried. Home, New Bedford, Mass.

Staff Sergeant CLAUDE A. SCHLESINGER, 24, Married. Residence, 13 Orchard Place, Hempstead, L. I.

Corporal THADDEUS P. KRASZEWSKI, Unmarried. Home, Glenburg, N. J.

Corporal FRANK X. DEELEY, Unmarried. Home, Daytona Beach, Fla.

Private CLINTON O. RHODES, Unmarried. Home, Clinton, N. J.

While awaiting the arrival of the firemen—a period that seemed hours, but actually was only a few minutes—a New York City fireman, off duty and living in the neighborhood, organized a women's fire brigade and with garden hose wet the houses adjoining the Kraft and Rangs homes to prevent the flames from spreading. The puny streams were obviously unable to cope with the fire of the plane and the two houses.

The fireman, who preferred to remain anonymous, halted a truck and obtained an extinguisher with which he tried to aid one of the aviators lying in 23rd Street with his silk parachute smoldering on his body.

Three fire trucks, two engines and a rescue squad, under Battalion Chief Peter E. Costello, responded to the alarm. Most of their work was at the Eighty-seventh Avenue location. While the firemen were burning houses and planes, other firemen and police emergency crews were attempting to pull the dead aviators from the plane around the corner on 23rd Street. There was less fire here, though the plane had left charred, seared path showing the course on which it had narrowly missed hitting houses at 86-23rd Street. In its course it missed the garage and the private hedge and left huge blisters in the paint on the house fronts.

A pilot's parachute smoldered on the porch of a house across the street. The ship apparently came down upright and skidded to stop in the grassy mall in the center of the street.

Mayor La Guardia, a World War aviator, pointed to its clearly marked pathway.

"See here," he said, "that fellow tried to land. See where he skidded along the road. He did not want to hit those houses."

The plane was at rest in front of the home of Mr. and Mrs. Albrecht Schwartz, 86-16 23rd Street. In the roof of their house was a jagged hole, three or four feet across, torn by the body of Corporal Frank Deeley, who had jumped out of the plane and still clung to it with his arms. His body struck with a crash through the kitchen ceiling and out the rear screen door into the garden hose, though even then it was apparent that the men must be dead.

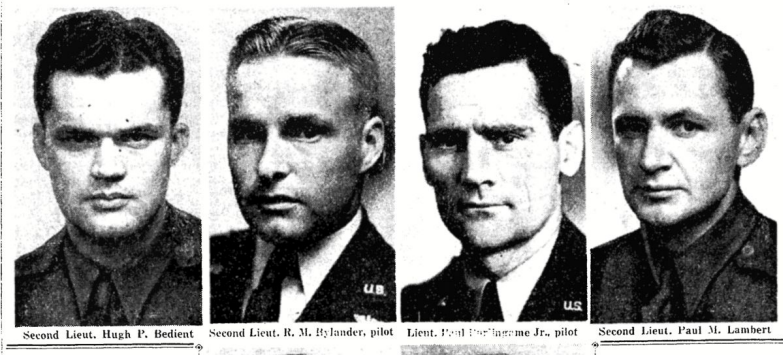
When the two ships locked in the



Where the planes fell in Bellerose. Arrow in upper left points to wreckage of ship which crashed on Eighty-seventh Avenue, killing its six occupants. Arrow in right foreground shows where other machine plunged to earth on 23rd Street, killing all five of its crew. Associated Press



Twisted mass of bomber which plummeted to front yard of a house. The dwelling was set afire by the blazing craft. Times Wide World



All pictures of officers are official U. S. Army Air Corps photos from Times Wide World



One of the planes in flames

Associated Press

Sky-Watchers Filled With Horror As Army Bombers Crash and Burn

Residents of Bellerose Manor Describe the Moments of Suspense When Planes Locked Wings and Plunged to Earth

One minute the four big two-engine Army bombers were dropping along through the still air 2,500 feet over the residential areas of Eastern Queens and Western Nassau. The early morning sun glinted from their silver wings. The thunder of their motors filled the air with sound.

Then—almost before the mind could grasp the fact—two of them crashed in screaming spins, twisting their eleven occupants to fiery death in adjoining streets of the little one-family home development of Bellerose Manor, just south of Hillside Avenue on the Queens-Nassau County line.

In the small houses some families were still at breakfast. In most, however, the man of the house already had gone to work. It was just before 9 o'clock. The older children were safely off to school. The younger ones were playing in the flower-bordered yards, many kept from straying by trim, white picket fences. In the back yards several women were hanging out the washing.

The roar of the motors of flying ships is a commonplace to that section of Long Island, not far from the Army air base at Mitchell Field, it toward the Roosevelt Field. But the war abroad had given new significance to fighting men and fighting planes, and many faces were turned to the sky as the flight passed overhead.

Hours later these watchers of the skies still were shaken by what they had seen. Some of them are unable to remember what they did or what they said when the two big planes came hurtling down. Few believed that the planes were going to crash until they were virtually in the street.

Mrs. Ida Smith, who lives at 211-21, Eighty-seventh Avenue, lives in her back yard transplanting flowers when she heard the death rattle of the planes. She tried to see one twisting down.

"I thought he was doing tricks," she said.

Then, she related, she saw the other right over her head and screamed to her next-door neighbor, Mrs. Elsie Gustafson, "Run, the coming down!"

Could move, she said, the two planes crashed, one in 23rd Street, the other in Eighty-seventh Avenue, just around the corner.

Turning from their flight as flames and black smoke poured from the two bombers, the women, joined by a neighbor, rushed to aid. "But there was nothing we could do," Mrs. Smith said sadly. "The heat was so awful we could not even get close."

The most harrowing experience was that of Mrs. C. G. Schwartz, who lives at 86-16 23rd Street. She was in her back yard hanging out the washing when the body of Corporal Frank X. Deeley—the only one of the eleven men apparently who got clear of the two planes before they crashed—plunged at an angle through the roof of her house through the kitchen ceiling and out the back door to land almost at her feet.

"I just saw the body coming down," Mrs. Schwartz, a white-haired woman of 68, said. "First I leg came down and then the body. I looked up and saw the body, but it was only a few feet above my head, and then it struck the roof."

She said she just stood there, fainting for a moment, and then ran to a neighbor. She was treated for shock by an ambulance surgeon from near-by Creedmoor State Hospital, but remained at home. Her husband, Albrecht, who works at night, came home soon after the accident. When he saw Corporal Deeley's body lying in his back yard, he thought it was that of his wife, and he, too, almost collapsed before he realized that it was a pilot.

Battalion Chief Peter E. Costello of the Fire Department, who knows who was killed, gave one of the most coherent accounts of what brought about the crash. Chief Costello was on a tour of his area and was standing in front of 304 E. House at Ninety-seventh Avenue and Springfield Boulevard when he saw the planes. He was watching the flight of the bombers.

"Three planes flying northwest," Chief Costello said. (The fourth was hidden from his view.) "It seemed that the back plane, from over the angle I was looking drifted over and locked wings with another plane on the same level. They stayed together for a moment and then one of them dived right down toward the earth."

An inside to order my men over, and we came and did what we could.

Mrs. Richard Rangs, who lived next door to Mrs. Emily Kraft—the

only civilian injured by the crash—said she was in the house when she heard the explosion and rushed to her side door. There in the driveway separating the two houses were the flaming bodies of three men. The whole front of the Kraft home was on fire and searing heat was coming from the plane smashed across the two front yards.

"I heard Mrs. Kraft screaming and I rushed into my backyard," she said. "I don't know what happened after that."

Neighbors found her sitting in a chair in the yard, crying hysterically. The front of her own home was on fire. They took her to a safer place.

One of the first at the scene apparently was Edward McLaughlin, 294-11 Eighty-second Drive, Floral Park. He was in front of his home, a half mile or so from the crash scene. He saw the two planes lock wings. He jumped into his automobile, called to his brother, and the two quickly drove to Eighty-seventh Avenue.

"There was a garden hose going on one of the lawns," Mr. McLaughlin said. "We grabbed it and tried to use it on one of the men who was lying against a garage door, his clothing all on fire. Then we turned it toward the plane, but we couldn't get near enough to do any good."

John R. Kelly, who lives on 23rd Street, next door to the Schwartzs, said the heat from the burning plane in front of his house was so terrific he could not get within seventy-five feet of the wreck.

"I could see the men inside, but I couldn't do anything to help them," he said.

"One was lying in the street under a piece of metal. He was still moving. I ran next door and saw the fellow who had come through the roof of the Schwartz home. I helped carry him out in the yard away from the house but there wasn't anything we could do. One leg was gone and the rest of the body was horrible."

At Mitchell Field the news of the disaster, worst in the history of the United States Army Air Corps, officers there said—was received with the light-hearted, fatalistic attitude of the military. The men were asked to cover their real feelings and protect their sanity.

They had gathered around one of them a student pilot with single gold bars on his shoulders still fainting for a moment.

When they were told of the statistics of the crash, the men of the staff seemed to be in a state of shock.

"It was Corporal Deeley," he was told.

He was silent for a moment, looking out the window of Headquarters Building at the houses still on the line in front of the hangars, with pilots and mechanics busy about the crash.

"He was a swell kid," the sergeant said.

Then he turned brusquely to his desk.

"Now, let's see. You wanted the list of names, didn't you?"

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