

53. History of Flight: B-25E, No. 44-29125 departed Nellis Air Force Base Nevada on 30 January 1956. The purpose of the flight was aircraft parts pick-up at Olmsted Air Force Base Pennsylvania, and delivery of two passengers to Andrews Air Force Base Maryland. The crew consisted of Major William L. Dotson, pilot, Captain John F. Jamieson, pilot, Captain Steve W. Tabak, pilot, Staff Sergeant Walter E. Sooccy, Crew Chief, and Airman Second Class Charles L. Smith, Crew Chief; Captain J. P. Ingraham and Master Sergeant Alfred J. Alleman were listed as passengers. The aircraft departed Nellis Air Force Base at approximately 1815E and arrived at Tinker Air Force Base Oklahoma at 2221E. The crew decided to ROM at Tinker Air Force Base in view of ice and snow reported on runways at Selfridge, the next point of destination, and brake trouble discovered on the aircraft. A new right brake assembly and left outboard brake assembly were installed. The aircraft was refueled at Tinker Air Force Base with 560 gallons of 100 octane fuel for a total of 975 in the tanks. Flight was resumed on 31 January 1956, departing Tinker Air Force Base at 0853E and arrived at Selfridge at 1313E. Major William L. Dotson was flying as co-pilot on this leg of the flight with Captain Jamieson as pilot.

Upon arrival at Selfridge Air Force Base, notification was received that approximately three hours would elapse before refueling could be completed. It was decided to proceed to Olmsted Air Force Base with the fuel estimated available i.e., 375 gallons, since this represented approximately 3 hours of fuel and the flight to Olmsted would require but one hour and 40 minutes. The estimate of 375 gallons remaining in the aircraft was computed

not more than 600 gallons would refuel the aircraft. The aircraft departed Selfridge Air Force Base at 1443E hours with Major Dotson as pilot and Captain Jamieson as co-pilot. Captain Ingraham and Sergeant Sooccy were in the forward crew compartment; Airman Smith and Sergeant Alleman were in the rear compartment. Captain Tabak remained at Selfridge. The flight proceeded under IFR conditions at 7000 feet indicated, 1000 on top, via Red Airway 20, Red 85, and Green 4. Position reports were given by Captain Jamieson at Windsor, Cleveland, Akron, Columbiana and Butler. The flight was uneventful until in the vicinity of Butler Radio Beacon, approximately 17 nautical miles northeast of Greater Pittsburgh. At Butler

propeller, no indication. North of the New Alexandria Beacon, approximately 31 nautical miles east of Greater Pittsburgh Airport, an obvious and unusual decrease in the fuel indication on all tanks was noted.

Approximately 120 gallons were indicated as in the aircraft at this point. Pittsburgh Center was contacted on UHF Channel 5 and a change in destination to Greater Pittsburgh Airport was requested and received at approximately 1600E. The aircraft was advised that the weather at Greater Pittsburgh Airport consisted of a 3000' broken ceiling with 10 miles visibility. River Radio Beacon, 5 nautical miles east of Greater Pittsburgh Airport, was tuned in on Radio Compass at this time and the aircraft homed in on a reading of approximately 285°. A few minutes after leaving the New Alexandria vicinity, at approximately 1603E, a large hole in the undercast was sighted and the IFR clearance was cancelled at 1604E. The aircraft was descended through the hole

[REDACTED] At this time wing tanks were indicating empty; main tanks were indicating approximately 80 gallons total fuel remaining. A large deflection on the radio compass indicator was noted, and close proximity to River Beacon was assumed and reported to Pittsburgh Center. The aircraft was descended beneath the broken ceiling to approximately 3000' indicated. (In this vicinity average terrain level is 1100 to 1200 feet.) Shortly after descending to VFR conditions, the heavily populated fringes of the city of Pittsburgh were sighted and course was altered to a generally southerly direction to avoid housing areas. At this time it became evident that fuel was decreasing constantly at an abnormal rate and it was decided to attempt landing at Allegheny County Airport, approximately 15 nautical miles south-east of Greater Pittsburgh Airport. Shortly thereafter, at approximately 1609E, the Monongahela River was sighted and both engines ceased operating at approximately 3000' indicated.

[REDACTED] Captain Jamieson transmitted a "Mayday" which was overheard at the Allegheny County Tower at 1609E on either 126.18Mc or 257.8Mc. Major Dotson lowered wing flaps and completed a wheels-up touchdown, heading downstream in a generally south, southwest direction at approximately 1610E to 1611E. The ditching was successful and all occupants evacuated the aircraft with no apparent injuries. All six persons were able to climb aboard the upper surfaces of the aircraft as it floated down the stream. The Monongahela River at this point varies from 800 to 1000 feet in width; the river depth varies from 25 to 35 feet. The current was estimated to be approximately 8 to 10 knots; the recorded water temperature was 35 degrees F; the recorded air temperature was 27° F; the recorded wind velocity was 8 to 10 knots, from the northwest. The aircraft remained afloat for an estimated 10 to 15 minutes.

[REDACTED] that the aircraft was sinking, [REDACTED] the crew and passengers to remove their shoes and swim to a log [REDACTED] floating nearby. [REDACTED] all six persons could swim. Sergeant Alleman, Airman Smith and Major Dotson reached the nearby log successfully. Major Dotson and Airman Smith remained with the log until recovered by a commercial river boat, approximately 15 minutes later. Master Sergeant Alleman reached the log but struck out for the left bank of the river

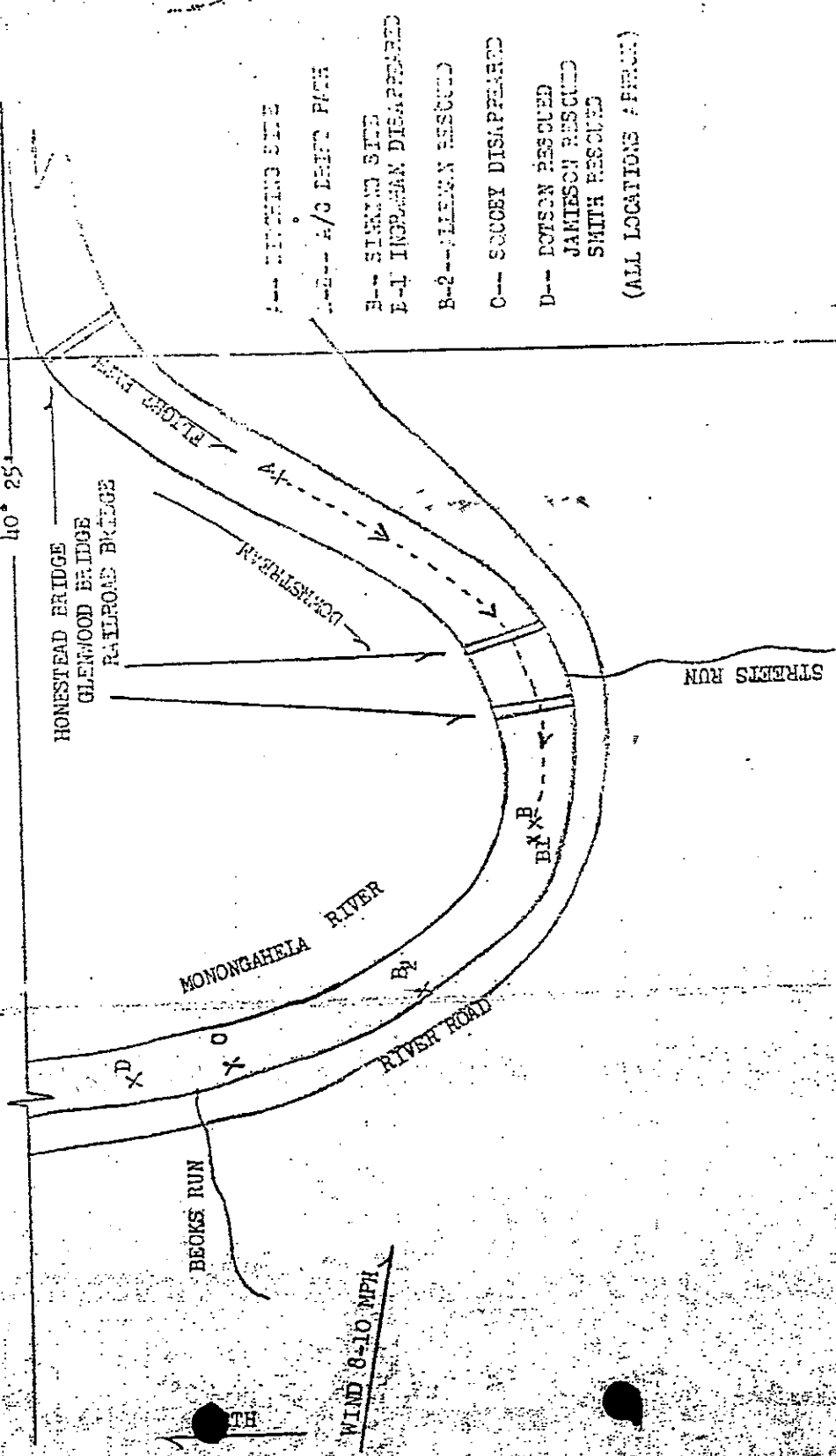
[REDACTED] He was able to swim ashore with great difficulty and was assisted from the water by civilians and local police officers. Captain Jamieson used a small wooden post he found floating in the water as partial support and was able to remain afloat until recovered by a police launch.

[REDACTED] Captain Ingraham [REDACTED] disappear beneath the water. Sergeant Soocey was [REDACTED] on some unidentified debris when last seen [REDACTED]

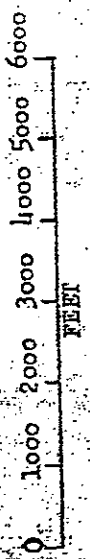
[REDACTED] Subsequently, [REDACTED] Sergeant Soocey swimming toward the left bank and disappear beneath the water approximately 60' from the shore. The aircraft drifted for an estimated [REDACTED] mile from the point of impact prior to sinking. Major Dotson and Airman Smith, the last personnel to be recovered were recovered approximately 1½ to 2 miles from the scene of impact. At the time of this report neither the aircraft nor missing personnel have been located.

79° 55'

40° 25'



- A--- DIVING SITE
- B-2--- A/C DUFF PITCH
- B--- SINKING SITE
- B-1--- IMPROPER DISAPPEARED
- B-2--- ALLEN RESCUED
- C--- SACCEY DISAPPEARED
- D--- DOTSON RESCUED
- JAMESON RESCUED
- SMITH RESCUED
- (ALL LOCATIONS APPROX)



Major Accident, 2000
 dated 31 January 1955, Pilot Major William
 Dotson

WIND 8-10 MPH