

NEVER FORGOTTEN: THE BADIN BOMBER

By

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Set on the backdrop of World War II, the tragic events surrounding the B-25 known as the “Badin Bomber,” occurred during a period of notable change for rural North Carolina. Not only did the accident leave a deep psychological scar on the people of this usually placid corner of Stanly County, but it also served as an early application of scuba recovery operations and a localized tale of loss many families would face during the war. This thesis tells the story of the B-25’s crash into Badin Lake and the people it affected. It investigates what the United States military did in the aftermath of the crash and attempts to explain the reason the aircraft crashed. It relays how the people of Badin continue to commemorate the memory of the two pilots who lost their lives that day, one of whom grew up on the shores of the lake. Through implementing a combination of data including oral histories, military records, recovery attempts and an archaeological survey this thesis seeks to be an academic source surrounding the Badin Bomber, its fate, and the aftermath. The goal of the thesis is to contribute to the application of Community Archaeology and a pathway for recovery of the two servicemen still resting at the bottom of Badin Lake.

“NEVER FORGOTTEN: THE BADIN BOMBER”

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

2LT	Second Lieutenant
ALCOA	Aluminum Company of America
BG	Brigadier General
COL	Colonel
DPAA	Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency
ECU	East Carolina University
EDU	Experimental Dive Unit
ENS	Ensign
EODMU	Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit
LTC	Lieutenant Colonel
MCAS	Marine Corps Air Station
MIA	Missing in Action
MG	Major General
NAS	Naval Air Station
NHHC	Naval History and Heritage Command
NC	North Carolina
PIR	Parachute Infantry Regiment
POW	Prisoner of War
U.S.	United States
WO	Warrant Officer
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

“Little time for a last farewell. Little time for the shock of fear. Scarcely a moments halt on the shore. With the guide and the boatman near: Charles how surprised you were to go. With little to suffer, little to know. Only a moment of dark. A dream of the fleeting night, and then the beautiful break of day, and the quiet peace of light, In the Joys of the Gloryland.”

-Rebecca McDaniel (McDaniel 1944)

1.1 Purpose of Research

The roaring drone of piston driven propellers was not an unusual sound for the skies above Albemarle, North Carolina (NC), and its surrounding countryside in 1944. Located 42 miles (mi.) northeast from the Army Air Corps base in Charlotte, it was a common wartime soundtrack for the farmers, smelters, fishers, and townspeople of the Uwharries region. Frequently the sound would be the airplanes making buzzes of the friends or family they knew while transiting to East Coast air stations. This time would be different however, when a legendary airframe known for striking one of the first blows against Imperial Japan came barreling across the southwest of town in the late morning of a sunny June day.

The heavy vibrations of an airplane flying so low across the town of Albemarle attracted locals out of shops and other places of work to see the commotion shortly before noon on 8 June 1944. According to one eyewitness in Albemarle, the airplane was flying at a low altitude, high speed, and towards the direction of Badin Lake. As a 17-year-old, Bill Love later described it, “I was up on the square when it came over, it was rattling the windows man” (Deese 1988:2). By

the time others were able to get out to catch a glimpse of the pilot, the aircraft was already disappearing over the northeast horizon of the town.

The weather was clear on the late morning of 8 June 1944 when the aircraft, a North American B-25H Mitchell, sped towards the landmark of Palmer Mountain, a part of the ancient Uwharrie Mountain chain that by 1944 had been turned into an island for a little over 20 years. The aircraft flying from Morris Army Airfield in Charlotte was making a beeline towards the small village of Palmerville located on Palmer Mountain's southwestern periphery and immediately adjacent to the north part of Badin. Behind the bomber's flight controls was Palmerville native, 21-year-old United States (U.S.) Marine Corps Second Lieutenant (2LT) Charles Merton McDaniel. McDaniel's copilot for the flight was 23-year-old U.S. Navy Ensign (ENS) John Earl Withrow from Patterson Heights, Pennsylvania. Both pilots were assigned to VRF-2 Squadron, a subordinate unit of Naval Air Ferry Command. The squadron acronym for reference: "V" refers to heavier than air (fixed wing), "R" for transportation and "F" for ferry. VRF-2 Squadron provided a critical logistics need transporting fresh from the factory aircraft to their home bases while also flying critically damaged, but functional, aircraft to repair facilities (Coble 2004; U.S. Navy 2015; U.S. Navy 1944:17-24).

The aircraft had veered 15 mi. from its authorized flight plan as it rumbled over the farms between Albemarle and Badin, towards Palmer Mountain. Residents of Palmerville, Badin, and workers at the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA) refinery stepped out to catch sight of the low flying aircraft. Local resident Wade Adkins had left the ALCOA plant to eat lunch at his home off Maple Street when the airplane flew directly over his location. He had just finished and was heading for the door when he heard the aircraft and rushed outside to get a view. "It sounded

like it was coming right through the house” (Lisk 2010:2). Shortly thereafter the aircraft disappeared between the treetops and Palmer Mountain.

Adkins had returned to work and watched as the airplane made its return circuit flying over the ALCOA plant. A short time after it passed over Badin Lake shore it began making a turn (Lisk 2010:2). Observing the flight along with co-worker Wayne Mabry, Adkins later reflected, “both Wayne and I said it’s going to crash because it was way too low” (Lisk 2010:2). As if on cue the aircraft plane struck water and produced a large cloud of smoke. Adkins’ co-worker, A.T. Hill, and two more ALCOA employees immediately jumped into Mabry’s car and raced through Pine Street to the Hardaway site. “We parked and ran through the woods as fast as we could to the lake’s edge, we saw debris scattered everywhere on the lake” (Lisk 2010:2).

One witness to the flyover and crash was 2LT McDaniel’s wife of almost seven months, Mary Elizabeth Hill. As she watched the airplane disappear over the treetops of longleaf pine towards Badin Lake, she heard the same sickening sound of an explosion. In a state of shock, she turned to face her younger brother and ran into the family house (Coble 2004:4). Citizens of the town, workers at the ALCOA plant, and family members of 2LT McDaniel responded with a frantic search along the banks and in the water of Badin Lake for the pilot and co-pilot.

1.2 Significance

The state of NC, of “first in flight” fame from Wright Brothers’ experiments in the small town of Kitty Hawk, is home to hundreds more small towns just like Badin, many with their own unique stories to tell. In this context the story of two servicemen in Badin during June of 1944 presents a small-town experience of tragedy on the backstage of WWII. The geographically

isolated region of Badin Lake and its adjacent town with a land area of 1.8 square miles (mi²) and population of 2,024 is a typical quiet rural region of NC (United States Census Bureau 2021). The average visitors to the area may be unaware of the region's strategic importance to the WWII effort or of the incident that struck Badin in 1944. That unfamiliarity is quickly alleviated by visiting the grassroots originated Badin Museum or spending time with locals whose families date back to the creation of the town.

The enthusiasm for regional history shared by the Badin Lake community provides optimal conditions for the application of a Community Archaeology approach on multiple fronts. Of these fronts, the tragic story of the Badin Bomber provides the most intriguing opportunity for this theoretical construct in real world application. The tragedy itself came to haunt and later define a sizable portion of Badin's identity. This thesis uncovered how in dealing with the 1944 tragedy that was wedged between the overseas invasions of Normandy and Saipan, the citizens of Badin were part of a Community and Public Archaeology project to preserve the story of the Badin Bomber. Researchers from East Carolina University only furthered this town's preservation of the story by providing additional support.

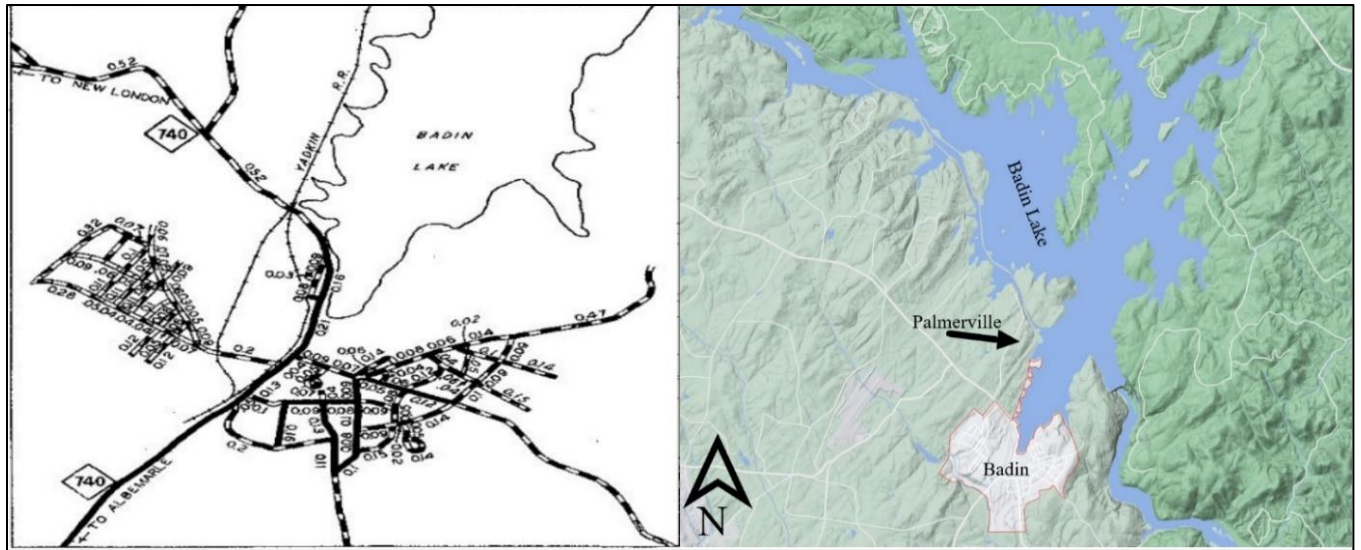


Figure 1. 1944 Map of Badin, NC contrasted with a modern map showing town and greater lake region (Photos from Badin Archive and Google Maps).

To date four separate aircraft recovery operations of the Badin Bomber have occurred: the initial search and recovery mission by the Department of the Navy in 1944, the Navy operation in 1993, a civilian led operation in 1999, and a Navy operation in 2000. Three out of the four operations were initiated through community efforts motivated to recover the remains of the two pilots. Of the four, only the first operation in 1944 recovered any aircraft parts (Coble 2004:6). Of all the operations, none have been able to positively identify the location of the B-25 or the aviators' remains.

As a result of the historical failures to positively locate and recover the aircraft loss, the previous research products tied to the Badin Bomber are focused on discovering evidence of the aircraft or pilots. This focus results in the unintentional consequence of the community experience of the disaster and their efforts to preserve the events surrounding it to be ignored at times.

The focus of this thesis is to uncover the experiences of the people living in the Badin Lake region from 1944 until the present and how they contribute to the overall story of the Badin Bomber. Most of the primary witnesses of the crash are deceased, leaving oral histories from their relatives or associates as the primary means of data collection; however, through a Community Archaeology approach, living firsthand witnesses were located and a fuller story has come to pass.

1.3 Research Questions

This thesis addresses the to which extent the application of Community and Public Archaeology approaches contribute to our understanding of WWII history, heritage, and its associated commemoration of Badin Lake and the surrounding community. To support this thesis the following questions will be addressed.

1. What is the history of the B-25 crash site?
2. What remains at the B-25 crash site?
3. What can oral histories contribute to our knowledge about the B-25 crash site?
4. What memorialization and commemoration exists today for the B-25 crash site?

While the focus of this thesis is the nature of the B-25 crash, the research is not exclusive to the incident. Badin residents were enthusiastic in sharing their individual family history leading into WWII and the greater contribution the town provided to the WWII effort. Their stories contribute to the overall picture of the incident and go further to explain why residents reacted the way they did to recovery operations.

Questions two, three, and four are interrelated to a degree in that a point can be made that question two influences the psychology behind three and four. Humans have an innate psychological impulse to preserve memory of tragic events (Barsalou and Baxter 2007:4). The nature of the Badin Bomber tragedy could have been the motor that influenced the larger historical preservation ongoing in Badin.

The third question addresses possible blind spots created in a temporal sense. The nature of global warfare meant that the Navy may have overlooked evidence in their June 1944 investigation. At the time of the accident, the Navy at the time was between the D-Day invasion in Europe, and the Saipan invasion in the South Pacific. To say that the Navy was logistically overwhelmed is an understatement. The additional layer of segregation meant that the Navy could have completely overlooked viable witnesses to the crash. Especially when it is considered given the nature of living in the region during that time. Members of the African American community of Badin were known to have been subsistence fishing on Badin Lake during the period of the crash.

Question four assesses how Badin utilizes organic assets to preserve their cultural history tied to the accident, and their greater pride for being a critical asset in WWII (*Charlotte Observer* 1942:14). Question four's additional goal is trying to identify further information that could help the community improve its commemorative information and current/future memorials. Current memorialization are impact indicators for the overall community feeling towards the tragedy and possible willingness to entertain future operations. They also point to how Badin internalizes its part in the WWII national effort.

Interest in the Badin Bomber has been high since it originally crashed in 1944. That interest reached a fever pitch with the operations conducted in 1999 (Coble 2004:9). Historically,

official narratives, newspaper articles, and interviews contradicted each other following the aircraft accident. Since the 1999 operation the fields of maritime, community, and public archaeology have matured to a point that this thesis can serve as a source of formal information sharing to provide a cohesive narrative of events that reduces the confusion derived from previous research, while also empowering the people of Badin in their continued commemorations of the crash.

Previous research operations focusing on strictly crash recovery did not formally implement oral histories of the community into their products. Primarily because it was not the intended end state of the operation. The thesis seeks to address this gap by utilizing a Community Archaeology methodology, that is involving the community at all levels of research (Pardoe 1992:139). There exist several local interviews conducted by the community, but to date no formal academic recording of oral histories has taken place (Lisk 2010:2). Further, oral histories have not been incorporated into the investigation of the Badin Bomber research. As such, the overarching goal for this research was to utilize a community archaeology approach and facilitate a space where residents with first and secondhand experience of the accident could participate and contribute to the larger research project.

This thesis also provides an anchor point for future operations to locate the aircraft or recover the service members' remains. Since the last Navy operation in 2000, technology for search operations have vastly improved. Concurrently, so have analyses, techniques, and procedures for conducting sunken aircraft searches. By creating a space for academic, government, and citizen research, the thesis provides a viable tool for future recovery or research operations. However, this is not to overshadow the intended goal of reinforcing the surrounding Badin Lake communities' sense of ownership to their history (Aitken and Simpson 2005).

1.4 Chapter Outline

Chapter one introduces the topic and provides a brief significance statement. It also addresses the research questions that will be answered through data collection and analysis. Chapter two provides information about the Badin Lake area and its history, generalized history about WWII training in NC, B-25 use in WWII, and the crash event under archaeological consideration. Chapter 3 is a literature review and methodology overview touching upon Community Archaeology approaches, the psychology related to crash incidents and eyewitnesses, and an in-depth discussion of the methodological approaches. Chapter four is an historical analysis including archival research and oral history collection. Chapter five reports the results of the archaeological pedestrian survey and photogrammetric recording. Finally, chapter six provides an overview of the results of the research and answers the research questions posed in the first chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND

2.1 Badin Lake History

Nestled within the rolling hills and deep valleys of an ancient mountain range, Badin Lake sits on the north-western periphery of the Uwharrie National Forest of NC's eastern Piedmont region. At over 5,000 acres, the lake passes through four different NC counties and is flanked by the towns Badin, New London, and Harris, as well as several small villages (Corbitt 1987:186-187). At its narrowest point in the southern reach of the lake sits the Narrows Dam and Power Plant Complex. Initially constructed in 1913 by a French operated company, L'Aluminium Français, it was completed by Southern Aluminum Company via a mixture of American, Italian, and French national workers. The construction of the dam and power plant followed the establishment of the company town of Badin in 1912 (Glass and Dickinson 1982:12).

Bordering the town on its western edge is the well-known Native American archaeological Hardaway Site. Named for the Hardaway Construction Company that helped complete the Narrows Dam, the site is known for its Native American artifacts believed to be from the Paleoindian period of 9,500 to 7,500 B.C. (Daniel 1998). The Hardaway site was located in 1937 by local electrical engineer and amateur archaeologist Herbert M. Doerschuk (Barnes 2007:9). To date researchers are still trying to determine the nature of the site, but its presence has caught the imagination of Badin residents for several decades (Sharpe and Pepper 1990:2).

In a state that contained 120 industrial towns by the year 1925, Badin presents a unique case for NC in which a Southern town was planned by a European company and completed by a Northern U.S. manufacturing enterprise (Glass and Dickinson 1982:1).

The River Yadkin is reduced about 25 mi. to the southward of Salisbury, to the width of 80-100 ft. For two miles it is narrow and rapid and in this narrow part, shad are caught in the spring of the year by hoop-nets as fast as the strongest men are able to throw them out. Perhaps there is not in the U.S. a more eligible situation for a large manufacturing town (Winterbotham 1796:201).

The original intent of the Badin region by corporate interests, was to supply a reliable source of electrical power for developing industries among the many lucrative mines found throughout the Uwharrie Mountains. It was this mining interest that necessitated the construction of a hydroelectric dam in the Yadkin River at its narrowest point west of modern Badin. Prior to that construction, two attempts to provide the region with electrical power would have to fail.

An English mining engineer, Egbert Hambley was the first to formally propose the idea of industrial development at what was referred to colloquially as “the Narrows” section of the Yadkin River in 1898. Hambley resided in the town of Salisbury, NC located 36 mi. northwest of the modern town of Badin. Hambley worked as a consulting engineer serving as a maven for British mining companies in NC. He additionally was a key figure in the development of infrastructure including railroad development, a cotton mill, and a bank for the Salisbury region (Glass and Dickinson 1982:5-6). In this capacity he recognized the need for providing power for the developing industries and associated infrastructure, and made efforts to establish power plants through his business connections. As one contemporary newspaper reported (Boylin 1898:1), “A part of Northern capitalists are inspecting the falls of the Yadkin in Stanly County. They propose the establishment of an electric power plant for the distribution of power to Albemarle, Salisbury, and Concord.”

Despite promising reports, the impracticality of the terrain at the Narrows combined with its relative isolation from transportation lines stunted Hambley's industrial development vision for the region initially. With the improvement of long-distance power transmission and the financial backing of George I. Whitney, however, the process of developing a hydroelectric dam began. Whitney and Hambley created the Whitney Reduction Works Company for the purpose of beginning construction of the Whitney Dam on the Yadkin in 1903; the Reduction Works was a subsidiary of the Whitney Company, that aside from hydroelectric development, owned mines in the region (Glass and Dickinson 1982:8-9). The dam was planned to be 1,000 ft. long and 35 ft. high. A 5 mi.-long canal was constructed south of the dam site that would send water from the dam to a power plant just south of Palmer Mountain (Bramlett 2018).

According to Floyd Culp, one of the oldest residents of Baden at the time of his interview in 1950, the Whitney Dam construction attracted what could be considered a cosmopolitan cadre of workers for the first decade of the 20th century in rural NC. "The construction brought immigrants from Italy, Indian migrants from Pembroke, black workers from southern states, white laborers from NC, and convicts from the Raleigh prison" (Heath 1950). At the turn of the century just prior to the Whitney Reduction Works activity, the region could be described as "nothing but corn, cows, and apple trees" (Narrative History of Baden n.d.). By the time construction of the dam was underway, the area was a turn of the century boomtown with railroads, electricity, and a diverse population all reminiscent of Gold Rush towns out in the American West. Mr. Culp went on to give a colorful description of the ad hoc village that formed around the Whitney dam site.

A lusty little village sprang up. There was a labor camp in which strange elements stirred, hill men, Italians, troublesome Sicilians and Negroes who were but a few generations from Africa. They worked by day and slept, drank, gambled, and caroused by night. Their quarrels were settled with the gun and knife. Men died along the great stone wall

which rose 35 ft. high and stretch 1,100 ft. across the Yadkin. Typhoid lurked in the river mists and men died of fever. Some were crushed beneath huge granite blocks. Others died beneath the wheel of the little steam donkeys called 'dinkies' by construction men that were used to haul materials (Heath 1950).

Like its predecessors in the Western Gold Rush, the boomtown of Whitney did not last. George Whitney's company faced several setbacks including an accident at the Gold Hill Baringer Mine in 1904. This was followed by other Whitney-owned mines in Cabarrus County filling with water, and outbreaks of typhoid at the Whitney Dam construction site in Stanly County. Another wounding blow for the company was the death of chief engineer Egbert Hambley on 13 August 1906, having succumbed to one of the frequent typhoid outbreaks at the labor camp (Glass and Dickinson 1982:12).

While the company losing its chief engineer, mining disasters, and viral outbreaks proved to be significant setbacks for construction, they were not the killing blow. The mortal strike resulted when famed banker and future U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, Andrew Mellon, forced George Whitney to sell his mining interests which were key to financing Whitney Dam (Glass and Dickinson 1982:12). By 1910 the Whitney Company was bankrupt, and the Whitney Dam unfinished (O'Connor 1933:76). The present remains of the Whitney Dam can be seen occasionally visible when lake levels are low (Figure 2) (Morgan 1961:5B; Bramlett 2018).



Figure 2. Satellite imagery Badin Lake region showing the approximate location of Whitney Dam ruins, the canal remnants, and present Narrows Dam (Photo from Google Maps).

In 1912 seeking an inexpensive source of electrical power for aluminum production, the French company L'Aluminum Francaise bought the bankrupted Whitney Company property along the Yadkin River including the unfinished Whitney Dam. Under their American subsidiary Southern Aluminum Company, the French industrialists abandoned the Whitney Dam and refocused power production about 5 mi. south at the Narrows. At this location, the French designed the 474,785 megawatt/per year dam and an adjacent company town planned right down to the types of trees that grew along its streets was created. In 1913 Southern Aluminum Company began construction on both, naming the town after the company president, Adrien Badin (Glass and Dickinson 1982:12).

The company town of Badin took over ten years to complete. It was initially designed by the L'Aluminum Francaise with the assistance of Pierson and Goodrich, a New York architectural firm (Glass and Dickinson 1982:16). The town featured a main office, garage, laboratory, plant manager residence, and a clubhouse for single male employees. Unique for the period and location within rural NC, the town was equipped with a public utilities system including fresh-water, sewer lines, electrical distribution lines, and a filter plant (Glass and Dickinson 1982:7). The growing town's population continued the diverse background established by the Whitney Dam. Many of the Southern Aluminum Company employees were from the former Whitney Dam construction operation.

The French company finished the single-family residences with a distinct European townhouse design, and set to work building 150 apartments, both along streets lined with rock-walled open storm drains (Glass and Dickinson 1982:16). The company town and Narrows Dam would only be half-finished by Southern Aluminum. The French were forced to pause construction of both with the outbreak of World War I in 1914 (Carr 1952:170). Many of the company's skilled engineers and technicians were French Army reservist and called back for service in the Great War (Glass and Dickinson 1982:13). Company president Badin turned to Andrew Mellon for financial assistance. By this point, Mellon's Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA) had obtained a monopoly on the U.S. supply of bauxite, the critical ingredient in producing aluminum. ALCOA purchased Southern Aluminum at a loss of one million (M) dollars from L'Aluminum Francaise (O'Connor 1933:91-92). The town is notable to this day for the unique French design of surviving company homes, and the construction quality of the schools it built for the children of African American and white employees alike (Dodenhoff 1992:3-4).

Following ALCOA's 1915 purchase, the company refocused effort on the construction of the dam at the expense of the town. Residential construction in stark contrast to French design included shanties and temporary structures to house the scores of laborers that were brought from the rural south, prisons, and foreign countries in a similar fashion to the Whitney dam construction (Bailey 1974:27). The building of the town did not restart until late 1916 with the building of a hospital, school, and theater (Glass and Dickinson 1982:17). Engineer A. J. Rice, an early resident of Badin describes leaving the Whitney station and arriving at Badin, a short journey south, for his new job as an in early October 1917.

We rocketed along in the small train, following the outlines of a channel or canal, on a roadbed just a few feet above the water, past some higher ground on the river side of the track, which I later learned was known as Palmer Mountain. Turning a long curve to the right, I saw across the water of an inlet a great number of shacks, looking more like beehives than houses, scattered over a hillside. This was another eye opener to me, which I later learned to be the Hardaway Construction Company's former camp. A mile or so further we reach the station of Badin, a typical small railroad station with horse drawn "hack" for passenger transportation available for anyone who wished to ride rather than walk to his destination (Rice 2020:2).

The ALCOA corporation completed the Narrows Dam with the final closure of the dam on 17 June 1917. A month later the dam began producing power to the surrounding area, a function it still provides today (Glass and Dickinson 1982:16). Upon its completion the Narrows Dam standing at 216 ft. high, and 1,654 ft. long was the world's tallest overflow type dam at that point. Following the completion of the dam in the summer of 1917, the area surrounding the Yadkin River north of Narrows Dam was inundated, covering entire sections of forests, Native American, African American, and European anthropogenic evidence (Rice 2020:2; Coble 2004:5).

The Badin Lake region remained relatively uneventful following the dam becoming operational. Residents of the area would endure the Spanish Flu epidemics of 1918, 1919, and

the stock market crash of 1929, but nothing of significant consequence otherwise. That is until a fateful day in the summer of 1944.

2.2 General history of WWII training in NC

The state of NC is a critical artery in the U.S. modern military apparatus. It is currently home to eight military bases representing four service branches of the Department of Defense (DOD). Aside from the significant economic impact these bases provide, the state is home to Fort Bragg, which is colloquially known as the center of the U.S. military universe. The military bases have produced countless trained service members to the DOD since WWII.

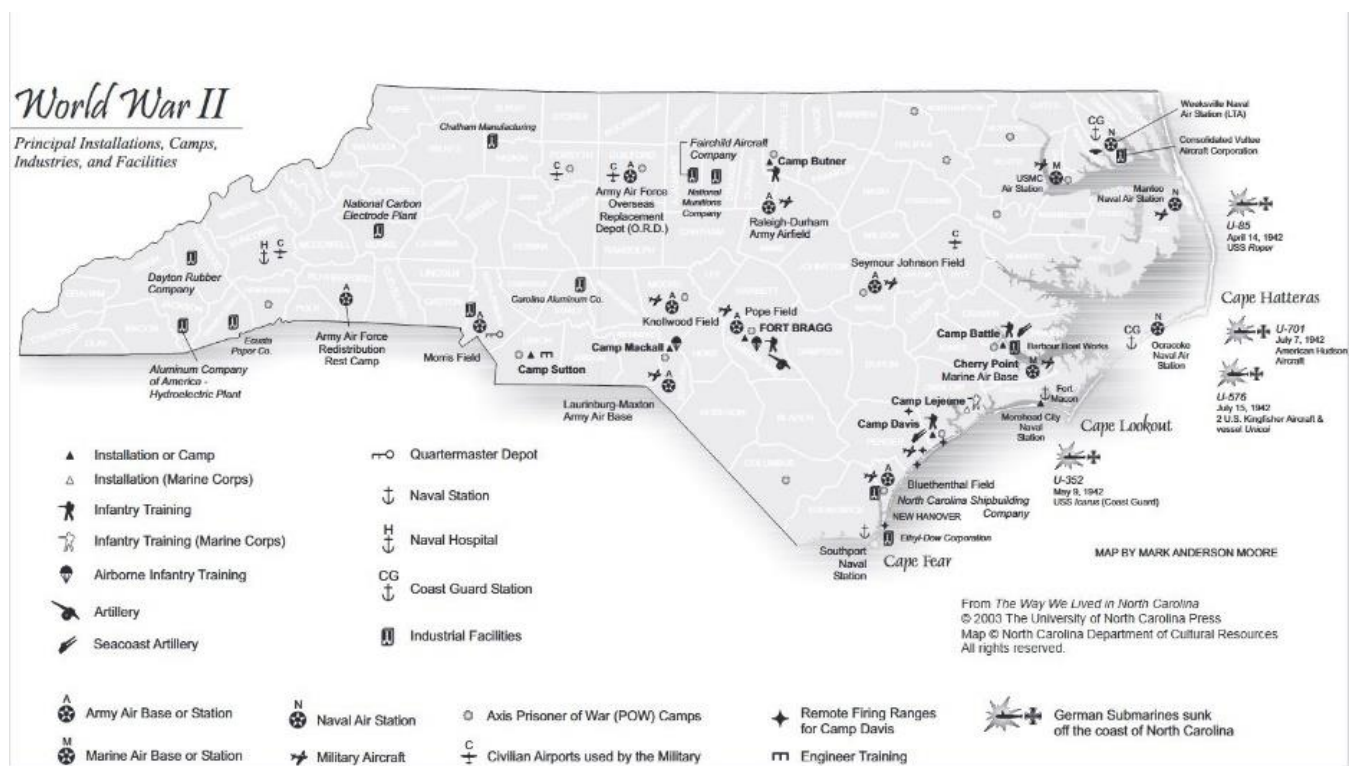


Figure 3. Map displaying locations of national strategic interest in NC during WWII to the present day (Map by Mark Moore 1992).

During WWII an estimated two million servicemembers were trained for combat at more than 100 Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard installations in NC (Billinger and Williford 2006). The military installations that could be considered of the most strategic importance for the military services combat training included Fort Bragg, Camp Mackall, Cherry Point Marine Air Station, Camp Butner, and Morris Field. Just as it is the present era, NC was considered a main hub to U.S. defense during WWII.

Initially known as Camp Bragg upon its establishment in 1918 as an artillery training base during WWI, the Fort Bragg of WWII evolved from a nearly mothballed training facility to the largest artillery post in the world (Billinger and Williford 2006). The large expanse of the base and moderate climate allowed for the central NC location to be an optimal training ground for long range artillery, airborne, and infantry units. Between September 1940 and June 1941 alone, Fort Bragg expanded from 376 assorted buildings and 5,406 servicemembers to 3,135 buildings and 67,000 servicemembers (Duvall 2008).

At its peak during WWII, Fort Bragg had a population of 159,000 with units consisting of the 2nd Armored Division, 9th Infantry Division, 82nd Airborne Division, 100th Infantry Division, and the Airborne Ground Forces requiring an estimated 10,000 pounds of food per month kept in supply. Fort Bragg also housed German POWs that conducted work based on their civilian experience (Billinger 2008).

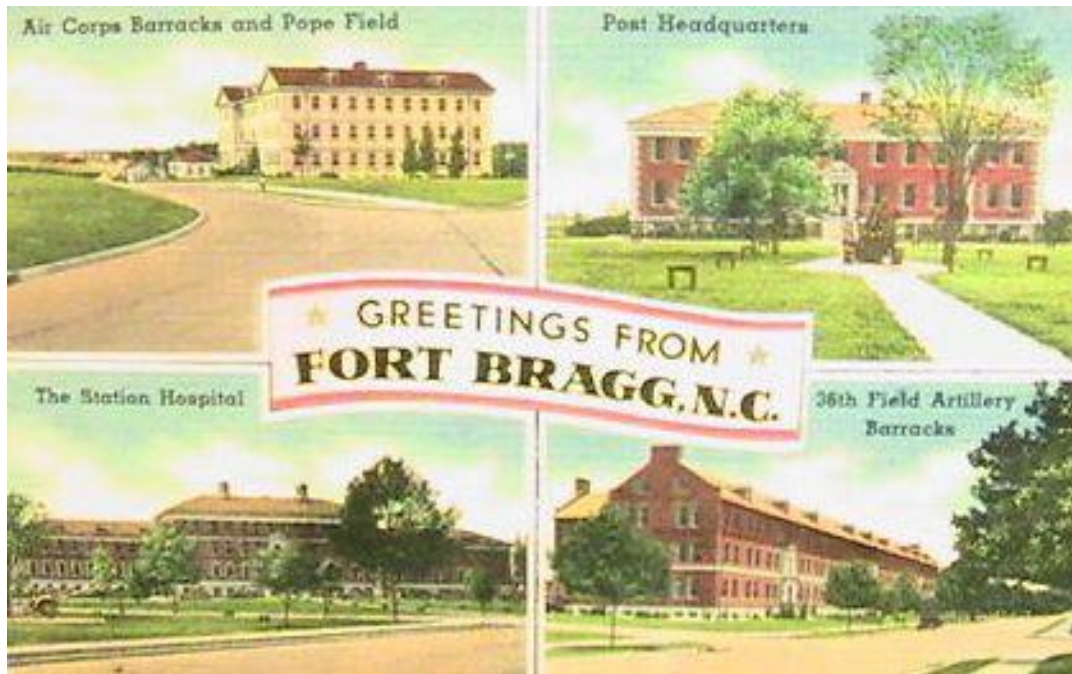


Figure 4. 1944 Postcard featuring key buildings on Fort Bragg that are still in use present day (Photo courtesy of the Airborne & Special Operations Museum).

The army post was the first installation where paratroopers were taught the all-around defense of seized objectives such as bridgeheads, airfields, and other strategic points. The 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment led by Colonel James “Jumpin’ Jim” Gavin made history by conducting the first full regimental combat training jump in U.S. military history in April of 1943 (Booth and Spencer 2013:86). Colonel Gavin would go on to become a legendary soldier of WWII.

To support the numerous airborne operations the U.S. Army utilized the adjacent Pope Army Airfield. The airfield became the site of extensive glider and large-scale paratroop maneuver training (Piasecki 2008). Additionally, the airfield provided assets for real world missions in defense of U.S. territory. A squadron of Douglas A-20 Havoc airplanes originating from Pope Army Airfield attacked and sunk German submarine *U-701* on 7 July 1942 about 23.25 mi. west of Buxton, NC (U.S. Navy 1942). Soldiers from Fort Bragg played instrumental

roles in the victory of WWII from the first U.S. combat airborne infiltration into North Africa and Sicily, to the D-Day invasion and the Battle of Bastogne that spelled the end for the Third Reich.

The expansion of Fort Bragg was so rampant following U.S. entry into WWII it required the creation of a nearby auxiliary base to support combat training. By 1943 the U.S. Army had completed Camp Hoffman about 40 mi. southwest of Fort Bragg. The site contained an airfield with 1,750 buildings including a hospital and movie theaters. Camp Hoffman would be renamed Camp Mackall, in honor of Private John T. Mackall, one of the first U.S. paratroopers killed in combat during the airborne infiltration phase of Operation Torch in North Africa (Wright and Greenwood 2008:14).

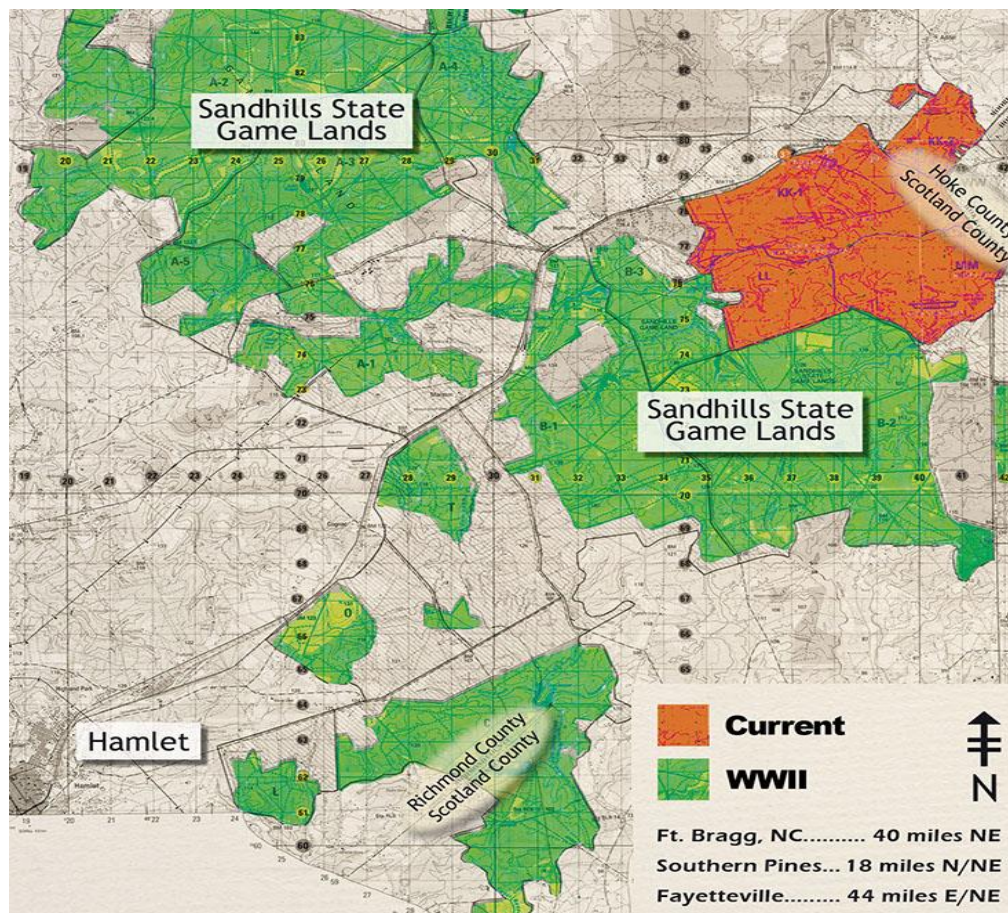


Figure 5. Map comparing the size of Camp Mackall during WWII to the present day (Photo from U.S. Army).

Nearby Camp Mackall was the training site for all five of the U.S. Army's airborne divisions during WWII. The legendary 11th, 13th, 17th, 82nd, and 101st Airborne Divisions along with several independent units conducted their combat jump training operations on the drop zones (DZs) of Camp Mackall (Fort Bragg Official History 2021). The base was also home to the combat portion of training for multiple airborne glider forces, in addition to prisoner of war (POW) camps for captured German soldiers and submariners.

One of the independent units of note to receive their training at Mackall was the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion (PIB). The 555th or "Triple Nickels" as it was nicknamed, was the first All-Black airborne unit in the U.S. military. They received specialized training at Mackall for a then classified mission codenamed Operation Firefly. The scope of the secret military operation entailed fighting U.S. west coast forest fires started by Imperial Japanese Fu-Go incendiary balloons that were arriving in North America through the Pacific Jetstream (Mikesh 2010:21). The paratroopers of the Triple Nickels would later go on to fill the ranks of early special operations and elite airborne units during the Korean War.

Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Cherry Point, a critical east coast U.S. aviation base located 10 mi. southeast of New Bern, NC, began its existence just before the Japanese Empire's sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, HI. Cherry Point's construction began near Havelock, NC in November of 1941 following the drainage of surrounding swamps and clearing of longleaf pine trees on 8,000 acres of land. Initially named Cunningham Field in honor of the first marine to become an aviator, Lieutenant Colonel Alfred A. Cunningham, the airfield was shortly thereafter renamed Cherry Point after a local post office in 1942 (Bell 2006). Cherry Point provided

training for both marine aviators and ground units deploying in support of Pacific Theater operations against the Axis. The airfield additionally served as an anti-submarine operations hub for the Army Air Corps and Coast Guard that patrolled the eastern NC coast for German U-boats.



Figure 6. Paratroopers of the 555th PIB enroute to an airborne drop at Camp Mackall (Photo courtesy of the 18th Airborne Corps Command Historian Collection).

The Camp Butner military reservation that occupies 5,000 acres near present day Butner, NC is a phantom of the U.S. Army base that once spanned over 40,000 acres of southern Granville County. Named for Major General Henry Butner, a NC native and former post commander of Fort Bragg, the base was located approximately 15 mi. north of Durham, NC. Camp Butner was

host to infantry, artillery, and engineer units mobilizing for service in both the Europe and Pacific theaters. The base was also host to a camp that housed captured German and Italian soldiers, part of a then classified network of POW camps maintained throughout the state of NC. In 1947, most of the base was decommissioned with the army hospital converting to a state psychiatric hospital while the POW camp became the site of a state prison (North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services 2017).



Figure 7. Watercolor of Camp Butner painted by German POW E. Kamler, 1945 (Photo from NC Museum of History).

Morris Field, originally known as Douglas Municipal Airport began construction as a New Deal project in 1935 on the western edge of Charlotte, NC (Sumner 2002). By its completion in 1937 it contained an administration/terminal building, a hanger, a beacon tower and three runways (Sumner 2002). The following year the airport added a control building and visual-type radio-beam system to assist pilots in blind flying and landing.



Figure 8. Mechanics Dot Horne and Jo Allred conduct repairs on an aircraft at Morris Field (From the Carolinas Historic Aviation Commission).

In 1941 the airport was leased to the War Department under the control of the U.S. Army Air Forces where it saw massive expansion. Renamed after NC local and WWI pilot Major William Morris, the airfield provided training to units such as the 29th Air Base Group and as a repair base for aircraft transiting from the West and along the East Coast (Howard and Luetzger 2006). Morris Field was returned to the state after the war, becoming the predecessor of present-day Charlotte Douglas International Airport.

2.3 General History of B-25 use in WWII

The B-25 Mitchell built by North American Aviation began as a prototype aircraft designated XB-25 in September 1939 and conducted its first flight 19 August 1940 (Jane's

Fighting Aircraft of WWII 1989:249). The aircraft was constructed in response to the U.S. Army Air Force's request for a medium bomber that could conduct short-range bombing missions. One of the heavier configurations was armed with a 3,000-pound bomb payload, a 75 millimeter (mm) M4 cannon, and six .50 caliber M2 Browning machine guns. The aircraft could travel at a max speed of 303 miles per hour (mph) (Linn 2020). Dependent on the configuration, the Mitchell could be crewed from four to six air crew. The aircraft would go through 11 different configurations based on mission needs ranging from raiding to reconnaissance.

The B-25 began its flight into legendary status with one of the first offensive operations against the Japanese Empire following the Pearl Harbor attack on 7 Dec 1941. The Tokyo Raid, later known as the "Doolittle Raid" after the daring flight commander James Doolittle, was conducted on 18 April 1942 as a revenge bombing on Japanese mainland for the Pearl Harbor attack. Leading a formation of sixteen B-25 bombers to their target, Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Doolittle helped plan the attack. The Mitchells had to be modified to carry twice the amount of fuel than their original configuration intended for 1,300 mi., as well as prove that a twin-engine airplane could take off and land from an aircraft carrier (Scott 2015:44).

Task Force 16, consisting of the mission launch aircraft carrier USS *Hornet* along with the lead USS *Enterprise*, and its support ships USS *Salt Lake City*, *Northampton*, *Vincennes*, *Nashville*, *Balch*, *Fanning*, *Benham*, *Ellet*, *Gwin*, *Meredith*, *Grayson*, *Monssen*, *Cimarron*, and *Sabine*, provided cover and logistics approaching the mission start point 300 mi. off the Japanese main island's east coast. Unfortunately for the task force, it was detected by one of the Japanese Imperial Navy's radio-equipped surveillance boats that alerted the mainland before the task force could sink it (Chun 2006:45). The mission was forced to launch 450 mi. from the intended start point.

The squadron of 16 B-25s approached Japan at an altitude of 200 ft., to mitigate detection by radar and patrol aircraft. The squadron approached Tokyo from a northerly direction and began attacking at 12:15 PM Tokyo time. The B-25s altered altitude from 1,000 ft. to rooftop level in their attacks against factories and other fixed positions meeting limited resistance as the Japanese were initially oblivious to the attack (Scott 2015:204-205). After the mission 15 of the aircrews crashed or ditched near China, while a 16th crew landed in Vozdvizhenka, Soviet Union.

The raid demonstrated the aircraft's flexibility as a low altitude bomber and strafing. While the mission did not cause severe damage, it proved to be a significant psychological warfare win, helping the U.S. regain their confidence following the losses against the Japanese post December 1944, as well as deeply shaking the Japanese belief in the safety of the Pacific buffer. Despite overwhelming odds, the Doolittle Raiders only suffered 3 killed in action and 8 POWs. LTC Doolittle personally believed he would be court-martialed upon being returned by Chinese soldiers to U.S. forces, but was instead awarded with the Medal of Honor and later retired as a lieutenant general (Oliver 2017).

Due in part to the low viability of medium bombing runs in the jungle biomes of the South Pacific, the B-25s were reconfigured for ground-attack armed with more machine guns, and lighter bombs for skip bombing tactics against ships. The Doolittle Raid had proven the capabilities of the B-25 at low altitudes for close air support, and the development of the skip bombing technique in which bombs could skip across the ocean surface like flat stones into ship hulls making it a formidable air asset. This was on full display when B-25s armed with deck-clearing .50 caliber machine guns caused severe damage to the Imperial Japanese troop convoy at the Battle of the Bismarck Sea in March of 1943 (Lardas 2021). The modified strafing

techniques of B-25s proved devastating to Japanese ground and seaborne forces in the South Pacific.

In the Mediterranean, the B-25 was utilized much closer to its intended design as a medium range bomber. The aircraft frequently targeted bridges and Axis logistics. Joseph Heller, a B-25 bombardier with the 488th Bombardment Squadron, flew in 60 combat missions and later authored a satirical novel *Catch-22* based on his experiences in the Italian and French campaigns. The B-25 fulfilled this medium bomber duty from the North Africa campaigns through the invasion of Sicily and Italy.

A lesser-known use of the B-25s was their support operations as an asset assigned to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). The OSS was a precursor to the modern Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and U.S. Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) that conducted clandestine guerilla, sabotage, and psychological warfare operations throughout the European and Pacific theater. The OSS B-25s were deemed too fast to be viable for airborne infiltration of operatives but could provide critical resupply to commando teams within enemy territory (Moore 1992:21). In March of 1945 alone, nine B-25s along with several C-47s and B-24s participated in delivering 1,476,942 pounds of supplies to OSS forces operating deep in the jungles of Burma (Sacquety 2008). The B-25's versatility through successfully strategic bombing, close air support, and resupply, guaranteed its place as a trusted workhorse for U.S. forces during WWII.

2.4 General history of the Badin Bomber crash

The two pilots assigned to the VRF-2 mission originated out of a pickup point in Columbus, Ohio when they landed in Morris Airfield on 7 June 1944 while enroute to their

destination at MCAS Cherry Point. Records are not clear as to the reason the two landed in Charlotte, but they spent the night with 2LT McDaniel's family in Palmerville where 2LT McDaniel's wife cooked them a meal (Ferrara 1993:2). 2LT McDaniel told his wife he would make three flybys around the home to let her know he was continuing to MCAS Cherry Point and would not be home that evening.

2LT Charles McDaniel was born 9 Sep 1922 in Palmerville, the small village wedged between the abandoned Whitney Dam canal on Palmer Mountain's southwestern edge and along Badin town's northwest border (Figure 9). Badin itself had only existed for nine years by the time 2LT McDaniel was born. McDaniel was known to be an adept athlete and skilled football kicker among his peers. Prior to joining the military McDaniel was studying agriculture at NC State University (Ferrara 1993:1).



Figure 9. Service photo of 2LT Charles McDaniel (Photo from Department of the Navy).

McDaniel joined the U.S. Naval Reserves 27 August 1942 as an aviation cadet and attended flight training at Naval Air Station (NAS) Olathe, Kansas (*Charlotte Observer*

1943:27). After flight school he commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps on 10 November 1943 and was subsequently assigned to MCAS at Edenton, NC (*Charlotte Observer* 1944:18; Officer Record Brief 1950). Marriage records indicate Charles McDaniel wed Mary Elizabeth Hill on 13 November 1943 in a ceremony presided over by Revered Kirk at the Palmerville Baptist Church (Stanly County Register of Deeds 1943:357).



Figure 10. Wedding photo of 2LT Charles McDaniel, and his wife Mary Elizabeth Hill (Courtesy of J Frank Burleson 1943).

Research on MCAS Edenton history by NC state military archivist Matthew Peek indicates a rationale for the Edenton assignment may have been for training on twin engine aircraft (Peek 2021). 2LT McDaniel's next assignment was at nearby MCAS Cherry Point serving as a pilot under the Naval Air Ferry Command. Based on some military records his

squadron VRC-2 was responsible for flying B-25 airframes from NAS Columbus in Ohio to Cherry Point, NC (Appendix E). His wife would frequently travel out to eastern NC to stay with him between missions (The Charlotte Observer 1944:18).

Ensign (Ens.) John Earl Withrow was born 15 December 1920 in Patterson Heights, Pennsylvania (PA) joining the U.S. Naval Reserve as an aviation cadet 23 July 1942 in Pittsburgh, PA (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania 1950:2079). He was assigned as 2LT McDaniel's co-pilot for the ferrying missions of new aircraft to Cherry Point, NC.

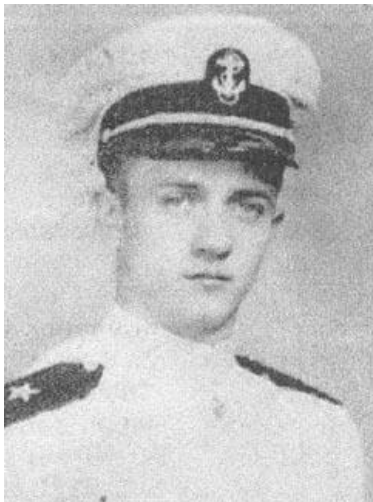


Figure 11. Service photo of Ensign John Earl Withrow (Photo from Department of the Navy).

The transport pilots were already severely behind schedule on their aircraft delivery mission based out of NAS Columbus, Ohio to MCAS Cherry Point, NC (MCAS Cherry Point 1944). It is unknown if their stop in Charlotte was related to maintenance or weather issues, although weather data for 7 June 1944 indicates clear air for the entire day (National Weather Service 2024). Whatever the reason, their mission shifted right, and they were wheels up by

12:23 pm on 8 June 1944. Sometime slightly after 12:40 pm the two pilots returned to Badin Lake beginning the circuits around 2LT McDaniel's home (Coble 2004:4).

Eyewitness accounts contradict what happened next. Some claim the plane only made one complete circuit around Palmerville and its adjacent mountain before crashing. Other witnesses say the B-25 completed two quick circuits around the mountain landmark. One group of witnesses claimed to smell gasoline (Ferrara 1993:2). Before the aircraft could complete its circuits, some witnesses reported hearing an engine sputter followed by an explosion coming from Badin Lake. PBJ-1H-89050 crashed into the lake at 12:45 p.m. (Coble 2004:4). Townsfolk and ALCOA workers raced to the scene of the crash site.



Figure 12. Squadron patch worn on the flight jackets of pilots assigned to the VRFs (Courtesy of the VRF-1 Association).

After reaching the shoreline Wade Adkins and A.T. Hill pulled off every article of clothing down to their underwear and dove into the massive lake (Lisk 2010:2). Adkins in an interview reflected that he was fearful the pilot was his friend that had buzzed his house in previous flight missions. As the men got closer to the wreckage Adkins saw something that he thought resembled a human head bobbing in the water. Shortly after, a boat crewed by Carl Culp and Jack Holt retrieved the two swimmers and returned them to a sea of onlookers that gathered at the lake's shore (Lisk 2010:2).

Witnesses of the wreckage stated they observed portions of a wing, the forward landing gear, government papers, and various scattered parts near the impact site. Locals Barrett Crook and Earl Beck recovered a thin piece of flesh or skin that measure 6 inch (in.) long by 2 in. wide attached to a piece of smooth board. The two men additionally retrieved a 30-gallon aluminum tank, a first aid kit, part of a military issued shirt sleeve, and one brown sock. They would later turn these articles over to U.S. Army officials investigating the crash (Coble 2004:20).

U.S. Army military police from Morris Army Airfield (AAF), site of the modern Charlotte International Airport, arrived a few hours later to cordon the area and establish an operations center. They immediately seized any evidence from the crash site and prevented civilians from approaching the lake. Reasoning for this was threefold; one to protect what integrity of the site was left for investigation, two to prevent civilians from looting materials, and three to maintain security for the Narrows Dam (Coble 2004:5). The third rationale was due to the ALCOA plant being a strategic source for WWII aluminum production and reasonable concern as any chaos would expose the Narrows Dam or smelting plant to saboteurs.

Dispatch and telegram communications between Morris AAF, NAS Columbus, and MCAS Cherry Point give a view into the official response to the crash. MCAS Cherry Point

initiated a “lost plane procedure” at approximately 1400 eastern war time (EWT) when PBJ-1H-89050 became an hour overdue on its flight from Morris AAF (Conradt 1944a:1). At 1600 EST MCAS Cherry Point Station Operations received a phone call from Morris AAF Base Operations reporting a B-25 type aircraft had crashed into Badin Lake at 1300 EST, sinking 190 ft., no personnel saved, no bodies recovered (MCAS Cherry Point 1944). At 2320 EST MCAS Cherry point relayed the information to higher commands including Washington D.C. via telegram. Interestingly, all reports include the aircraft flying at low altitude off the lake and making wing contact with the water as it turned prior to a recovery team’s situation report (SITREP). Strangely, the telegram from MCAS Cherry Point sent on 8 June contradicts a letter the MCAS Commander would send on 28 June 1944. The 8 June 1944 dispatch states the aircraft was listed unaccounted for at 1800 EST while the 28 June 1944 letter states it was unaccounted for around 1400 EST (MCAS Cherry Point 1944; Conradt 1944a).

MCAS Cherry Point took overall command of the operation and sent a survey party which arrived on 9 June 1944. They were able to positively identify the aircraft as PBJ-1H-89050 from a test pilot acceptance form which had floated to the surface of the lake. Upon the survey party’s return to Cherry Point on 10 June, they reported to the MCAS Post Commander Colonel (COL) P.E. Conradt. In the team’s debrief they stated the plane was in 150 ft. of water and did not believe salvage was possible given the lack of equipment or qualified divers organic to MCAS Cherry Point (Conradt 1944a:2).

At some point on 10 June, COL Conradt made a request of support to Naval Operations Command in Washington D.C. According to COL Conradt’s report, his office received an air transportation request to pick up a team from the Experimental Diving Unit (EDU) at Anacostia at 1000 on 11 June. Upon the same day arrival to Cherry Point, the EDU team was familiarized

with the B-25 airframe. When finished the team loaded its equipment and personnel into trucks and convoyed out to Badin (Conradt 1944a).

The EDU team arrived in Badin, NC at 0800 on 12 June 1944. Ensigns Hill and Kratochvil reported that after rigging their barge, the team moved out to the suspected crash site. Despite searching areas indicated by witnesses and spending four days utilizing diver surveys and grapnel hook drags, the team was unable to find the crash. Besides the large surface area, the search proved particularly challenging as the site was formerly a river valley filled with slopes and unfelled trees. Likely frustrated from no sign of debris and losing several grapnel hooks, the EDU moved onto more drastic measures (Coble 2004:5).

According to Coble's (2004) research and the official EDU report, the team began utilizing dynamite to find the site. They initially started off with 86 sticks of dynamite somewhere north-northwest but within sight of the Narrows Dam. They then purchased 1,000 lbs. of dynamite from Stanly Hardware Company in nearby Albemarle setting off ten 25-lb. charges with no positive results. On 17 June as a "Hail Mary" last ditch effort the team set off four 50-lb. charges finally getting an evidentiary material response (Coble 2004:5).

The explosions resulted in hydraulic fluid and paint coming to the surface. The team immediately sent a diver down who reported parts of the plane all over the place. The diver additionally reported that the main part of the plane seemed to be intact, in 134 ft. of water, about 25 ft. long, and had been badly crushed. The diver additionally noted there were trees nearby from 20 to 50 ft. tall and a silt bottom estimated at 10 ft. deep. The team would commit to six more dives in blackout conditions before holding a conference and determining it would be impossible to recover the remains owing to the badly crushed nature of the wreck site. Reviewing records implies there was some sort of safety incident for the EDU. According to

Coble (2004:6), an issue with an air compressor meant to supply air to the divers malfunctioned resulting in one diver being retrieved unconscious . Interestingly, Coble's report is much more detailed in the use of explosives than the EDU's report to higher command. The EDU seemed purposely vague about explosives use and in one part underestimating the charge strength. Their report of high explosives use does not go beyond the operations officer's level of command (Coble 2004).

The team reported back to MCAS Cherry Point operations officer LTC Robert A. Black on 18 June after one week of discontinuing their salvage effort. They believed recovery of the aircraft remains could only be achieved by utilizing pontoon type buoys or flotation bags. The EDU team restarted operations on 23 June until 8 July when they were put under orders by the EDU commander for return to Washington D.C. (Conradt 1944b).

In COL Conradt's report to the USMC Commandant and the Chief of Naval Operations, he informed that while parts of the plane were recovered in the renewed operation, neither servicemen's remains had been found. COL Conradt speculated that given reports from the EDU that the aircraft likely disintegrated on impact. He additionally stated there is the possibility the pilots are tangled with wreckage in the submerged trees or still strapped to their seats. In the latter case COL Conradt believed the combined weight of their bodies and the chairs would have caused them to be buried at the bottom of the reservoir. He recommended discontinuing salvage attempts given hazardous conditions and the further endangerment of EDU divers (Conradt 1944b).

2LT McDaniel's father, Lee Edward McDaniel, sat on a hill overlooking the crash site, forlornly observing every single day of the search. He wanted the plane raised and specifically asked ALCOA to request the Navy remove the wreckage from the lake. When asked in 1999

about the B-25 possibly being recovered, 2LT McDaniel's sister Rebecca Sykes stated she believed her father would support it (Coble 2004:6).

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

3.1 Introduction

The goal of this thesis is to establish a product that utilizes a Community Archaeology approach to explore the perceptions and experiences of Badin, NC residents and provide a degree of clarity on the events surrounding the Badin Bomber crash. This fills unintentional oversights and gaps left by previous researchers and provide a local voice for the citizens of the region. The following chapter provides a review of referenced literature focusing on the application of Community Archaeology and psychological research as it relates to memorialization. The chapter also covers the use of secondary and primary archival research, pedestrian archaeological survey, and oral history methodologies.

The Badin Bomber incident left an indelible mark on the psyche of Badin if a town could be believed to carry its own triumphs and trauma in the same context as a person's psychology. It seems almost every person in the town has a story or anecdote about the incident. Some of these stories appear in newsprint following the 1944 accident, while others have taken on a local folkloric flavor with theories discussed at the local social club and museums. One thing established early is that the people of Badin are fiercely protective of the downed aircraft and its missing pilots. This meant that the establishment of rapport was critical to any future assistance from the townspeople.

3.2 Literature Review Community Archaeology

During the early stages of the thesis development, a Community Archaeology framework was chosen in the hopes of involving the region in the research on their area. The use of oral histories and interviews, a tenet considered important in Community Archaeology (Tully 2007:166), allowed for the incorporation of local voices in the research. Community members had already taken great strides in recording, remembering, and displaying their local history, as such the methods used for this thesis needed to be integrated into that existing framework.

Community Archaeology is about the inclusion of communities in the archaeological process. It embraces the idea that more can be accomplished when archaeology is conducted “with, for and by” community (Tully 2007). Levels of control over research are variable under this framework where complete control can be provided to the community, or a range of control and input can be adjusted to suite (Marshall 2002; Moser et al. 2002). While there is not an absolute definition or framework for all Community Archaeology projects as each is different, scholars typically agree that there are some points that should be followed (Marshall 2002; Moser et al. 2002). These include:

- 1) Ensure communication and collaboration at every level of the research project.
- 2) Employment and training of community members to assist with the project.
- 3) Collection of oral histories and interviews with community members.
- 4) Presenting research finding in relevant and digestible formats.
- 5) The creation of educational resources.
- 6) Accessibility of data.
- 7) Collaborative efforts in merchandising and products.

As much as possible, these methods or tenets were attempted during the Badin Lake B-24 crash investigation. The application of such an approach was not without limitations but those will be discussed further in the data and analysis chapter of the thesis.

In the U.S., Community Archaeology typically falls into three patterns that collaborate with either Indigenous people, descendent communities or those that reflect a nonindigenous local community population. In the Indigenous population case, Community Archeology attempts to bridge gaps in archaeology's interaction with American Indians, particularly to avoid the wrongdoings of the past (Watkins 2006:xi-xvi). In the descendant community, the population is recognized through its relationship to a specific archaeological site (Singleton and Orser 2003:144). In the third sphere the local community can sometimes intersect with the descendant sphere, but reflects a population that may live on or adjacent to a prospective research site.

Community Archaeology case studies that focused on Indigenous sites are important to this thesis as they can reveal best practices in working with target audiences that may not be initially receptive to archaeologists outside their community. Anthropology and archaeology in the U.S. have historically had a sometimes acrimonious relationship with Indigenous tribes (Watkins 2006:xix). The legislation of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in 1990 followed by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) public law 102-575 in 1992 created groundwork for trust to develop. Stated laws established left and right limits for archaeologists, as well as a specific legal duty to consult American Indian communities about their human remains and heritage (Watkins 2006:xx).

Choctaw Nation member and archaeologist Dr. Joe Watkins is a key researcher to bridging the gap between archaeology to Indigenous peoples. Utilizing tenets of Community Archaeology, Dr. Watkins empowered American Indian tribes to protect their cultural resources

by providing education on NAGPRA and NHPA legislation (Watkins 2000). In his work, *Indigenous Archaeology*, he provided case studies in which Community Archaeology was effectively applied.

The case study reviewed was that of the Pawnee, Wichita, and Arikara Tribes' objection to a burial pit display known alternatively as the Whiteford or Salina's Indian Burial pit between Salina and New Cambria, Kansas (KS). It was located by accident in 1873 when Benjamin Marlin was building a dugout home on his property and located some human remains. By 1934 amateur archaeologists Guy and Mable Whiteford had relocated the site and were in the process of excavating multiple burial pits (Roper 2002:247-246). Towards the end of the 1930s the Plains burial complex had become a tourist attraction according to a travel brochure (Figure 10) and post cards depicted Indigenous remains on display. For a price of \$3.50, tourists travelling across the U.S. were given entry to the site (Gulliford 1996:9). The Price family, whose property the burial pit was located on, evicted the Whiteford's in 1946 (Roper 2002:255). The eviction proved to be under the dubious claim of wishing to move into the farmhouse. In fact, the Price family merely wanted sole proprietorship of the lucrative attraction off the future Interstate 40 highway (Roper 2002:257).

The offensive human remains display avoided wide scrutiny until 1972 when the Lutheran synod publicly criticized the site's existence and refused to hold its annual meeting in Salina, KS as a result (Roper 2002:257). While the Whiteford's engaged in reasonable archaeological process for the era, the Price family treated it in a similar fashion to a circus roadside attraction causing the Kansas State Historical Society to weigh in:

The Kansas State Historical Society also recognized the site's scientific importance, and this, coupled with the inadequate display facility and lack of interpretation at the site, caused the society to propose in 1985 that it be acquired by the state (Watkins 2000:120-121).

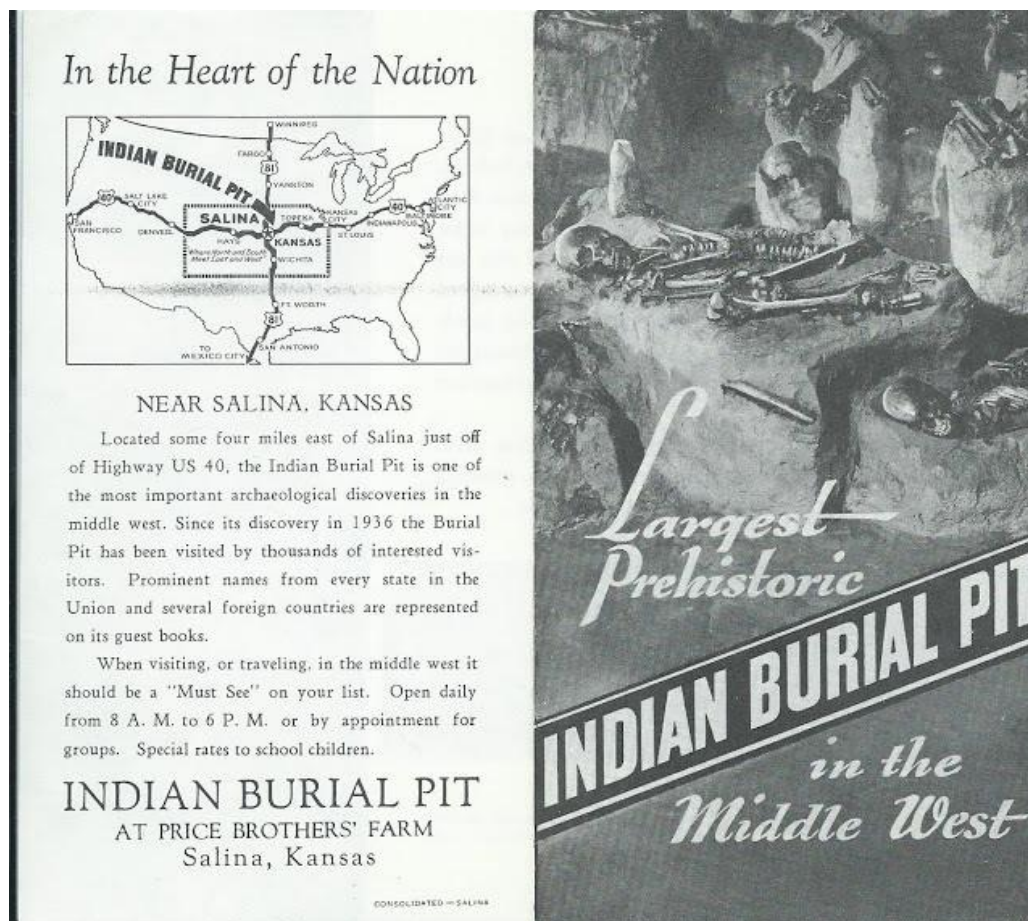


Figure 13. Part of a 1930s tourist pamphlet advertising the burial pit (Photo from Champ & Mabel Collectibles 2023).

The historical society repeatedly attempted to obtain the property from the Price family with the purpose of creating an educational interpretation of the site. Learning of this intent the Pawnee, Wichita, and Arikara tribes met with the historical society to voice their concerns of the continuing display of 146 American Indian remains and the organizations' plans for the site (Watkins 2000:121). As a result of this meeting the historical society stopped their plans to acquire the site and pivoted toward assisting the tribes to reacquire remains, grave goods, and other artifacts for reburial.

Concurrent with this pivot, the society along with tribal representatives, drafted legislation addressing the display of human remains in the Kansas State House Bill 2704 of 1987 (Watkins 2000:121). The bill was defeated due to its lack of compensation to the Price family in the event of their business being ordered to close post ratification (Stolfus 1988:4). An additional bill killing factor was the opposition the bill faced from Wichita State University's Anthropology Department.

The Kansas State Historical Society and Native American tribes would not be deterred and made a negotiation for the sale of the land the pit was located on and the agreement that all commercial operations of the burial pit would cease upon sale. Archaeologists attached to historical society took steps to protect the site by burying it *in situ*. After gathering remaining artifacts removed from the site, archaeologists along with representatives of the Pawnee Tribe conducted a tribal religious ceremony. After covering the site with soil, archaeologists covered the site with 6 in. of reinforced concrete and drain holes to promote the natural deterioration of the site (Watkins 2000:122).

Grassroots cooperation between the historical society and Pawnee later influenced the Kansas Unmarked Burial Sites Preservation Act Kanas H.B. 2144 of 1989. The law that prohibits the excavation or collection of any human remains recovered from a gravesite outside of a cemetery while also requiring consultation with Indigenous or descendant populations on the disposition of exhumed remains (Witty 1989:125). This case highlighted by Dr. Watkins is representative of how Community Archaeology can bridge gaps to both empower and advocate for communities attached to specific archaeological sites that may not have the resources to properly address it themselves.

Wendy Coble's 2004 work for the NHS titled "The Badin Bomber," highlights how implementation of Community Archaeology can not only mitigate costs and time, but also inculcate a stronger feeling of ownership by the local population for a given site. Much of the preliminary research work of the site had been initially conducted by residents of Badin. While Coble's process of searching for the B-25 is covered elsewhere, this section highlights how she involved the town of Badin in the help.

Coble first learned of the Badin bomber through a 1998 chance meeting at her parents' church in Albemarle, NC a town only 5-6 mi. southwest of Badin (Coble 2004:7). She had just graduated from the East Carolina University Program in Maritime Studies and was able to aid the Badin community within an academic context. Pairing with local Badin Bomber and aviation enthusiast Bill Love the two set out to start search mission.

Coble enlisted the help of Stanly County locals on many fronts of preparatory research. Some accessed archives of local newspapers while others such as members of the Yadkin Pee Dee Lakes Development Organization offered to meet with ALCOA on Coble's behalf. On the other end local citizens donated housing as well as fuel to help support the team's search mission (Coble 2004:13). To assist in financing the mission local Badin artist Roger Thomas created a painting that depicted the final flight of the B-25. Prints and t-shirts of the image were sold to directly finance the operation. By inviting the local community to have a quantifiable stake in the research, Coble was able to relieve a great deal of pressure on the team's daily operations.

3.3 Literature Review Psychology

The Badin Bomber incident at Badin Lake, NC represents an unusual archaeological site in a psychological context. There is no denying that the event was a traumatizing experience for

the citizens of the region, and to some effect represents a town that could have collectively suffered a wartime shell shock event so close to home. While many Americans lost loved ones in the distant fields of Europe, deserts of Africa, and jungles of Southeast Asia during the war, this was an unusually rare event in which the violence of WWII visited a relatively insular part of NC. The event still manifests itself in the people of Badin via their feelings towards the crash today.

Peter Elsass's (2001) research in Latin America titled "Individual and Collective Traumatic Memories," explored the idea of villages and towns having a collective PTSD from war zones that was passed on generationally. He found variables such as specific culture or degree of violence that determined the subjects' coping mechanisms or willingness to discuss traumatic events. In villages in Peru, he found that adults that suffered the events were typically unwilling to speak about the violent events with strangers. Interestingly, the same adult school aged children were often willing to recount what they overheard adults say about the war to each other (Elsas 2001:309). Elsass's research demonstrates a pattern in which an individual's proximity to the traumatic event may correlate towards their willingness to participate in research.

In a research article "Historical Trauma as Public Narrative: A Conceptual Review of How History Impacts Present-day Health," authors Nathaniel Mohatt, Azure Thompson, Nghi Thai, and Jacob Tebes (2014) present the idea that historical trauma directly influences both the physical and mental health of individuals. Their research covered a spectrum of socio-ethnic groups, including but not limited to those that were subject to colonization, concentration camps, enslavement, prisoner of war camps, and genocide. The authors made a distinction between an academic interest in traumatic events, and the reality experienced by those that suffered through

it or passed the experience on via narrative to their descendants (Mohatt et al. 2014:6). This is relevant to Community Archaeology approaches through the reinforcement of the idea that it is important to have a high degree of sensitivity with the target community. The possibility exists that researchers become so caught up in the academic value they miss the present lived community experience. This could risk creating animosity with the community where researchers meant no offence.

In terms of health impacts the article highlighted the issues Indigenous tribes of North America faced when they were forcefully placed into boarding schools. It was found that families that suffered under these U.S. and Canadian government policies between the mid-17th to early 20th century demonstrated generational health issues such as drug use, depressive symptoms, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The original sin committed by these governments caused trauma several generations following the people who were held in these boarding schools. The research article contended that the more awareness descendant groups have of the historical trauma effecting their health, the more likely they are to see the overall historical trauma narrative as being relevant to their own life (Mohatt et al. 2014:4). While these and other examples demonstrate that historical trauma narratives can have a negative effect on a population, Mohatt et al. show other examples in which this framework can serve as a source of strength. Their article cites multiple examples where tragedy that befell a large community was used as source of resilience and pride (Mohatt et al. 2014:11). “The Great Chicago Fire of 1871” devastated the city of Chicago, Illinois, leaving one third of it in ruin and almost 100,000 people homeless (Rayfield 1997). Rather than a traumatic ghost haunting the memory of Chicago, residents take pride in referring to it as “The Second City” and created a culture of perseverance against adversity in the city that is evident to the present day (Mohatt et al. 2014:12).

A recent project that investigated the idea of generational traumatic experiences and their effect on communities is the ongoing research into the mass graves tied to the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. Once a source of significant economic mobility in the post-bellum U.S. for African Americans, the neighborhood of Greenwood was essentially erased from the map and the memory of American history. Spurred by a racially motivated riot of white American residents of Tulsa, the neighborhood of Greenwood, known as “Black Wall Street” for its thriving African American owned businesses, was burned to the ground and many were murdered (Oklahoma Commission 2001). A Community Archaeology project developed in the town and as of 2023, a total of three archaeological digs have been conducted at Oak Lawn Cemetery. A total of 89 human remains tied to the massacre have been exhumed so far and identified (Elassar and Langmaid 2023). In many cases families had no closure as to the fate of their loved ones that had been murdered in the attack. The families maintained oral histories of their loved ones being buried in unknown graves from the Tulsa Race Massacre, and are fiercely protective of a memory that has otherwise been erased from U.S. history.

While the above literature cited is focused on regions and cultures markedly different from Badin, some commonalities in community trauma are present. Some research demonstrates how psychological scars tied to traumatic effects can affect the populations of entire towns or culture groups. The people of Badin, much like the descendants of those in other studies, responded to the trauma in similar ways. Coble perceived that the people of Badin were insular and unwilling to share information (Coble 2004:12). Alternatively, their perceived insularity could be a lingering effect of common trauma influencing their interactions with those that did not experience it. As such it is a valuable process in determining how a community copes externally through memorialization compared to what they may feel internally about the crash.

3.4 Primary and Secondary Archival Research

The story of Badin and the surrounding regions around modern-day Badin Lake is one of boom and bust. To better understand the present community, it is necessary to start at the very beginning. The region began to advance with a decidedly rapid pace that seemed to align with the advent of electricity in the U.S. For this reason, many primary and secondary records and publications were reviewed.

To gain an understanding of the region's history, the author read widely through secondary sources including the history of Native Americans in the region through to the early colonial and pre-WWI era, WWII, and modern history. Books and publications were sourced from East Carolina University's (ECU) Joyner Library, as well as books made available at the Baden Museum.

Initial archival research was conducted at the Stanly County Historical Society and the Baden Museum in tandem with software assets owned by the Blackstone Group which include Ancestry.com, Newspapers.com, and Fold3. Stanly County Historical Society contains primary resources such as memoirs of Badin residents from the 1920s, military documents, and notes on previous expeditions to find the missing B-25, along with various tertiary documents to better paint a picture of the town at the Narrows in wartime America. Resources from the physical depositories were systematically scanned with an Apple iPhone 8 for later reference.

Utilizing Ancestry.com, family trees were reconstructed for both 2LT McDaniel and Ensign Withrow. By entering in known data points within the trees, Ancestry.com algorithms pointed to further data contained within various census data, military records, and newspaper resources tied to both servicemen and the landscape of Stanly County, NC. The intent of these

activities was to fill as many gaps as possible left open by the primary resources within the historical society or Badin Museum.

Academic research on the Badin Bomber and the plane's two losses was limited to surviving official military recovery operations records and a 2004 report by Naval History Heritage Command archaeologist Wendy Coble. Particular attention was paid to the NHHC's available data on the Badin Bomber. Additionally, resources such as the base historian at MCAS Cherry Point and any U.S. Army assets engaged in the recover were reviewed.

An unorthodox approach was taken by having U.S. Air Force Brigadier General (BG) Gentry W. Boswell review the gathered evidence and known facts of the B-25 crash incident. BG Boswell is an experienced pilot with over 4,800 hours flying the B-1B, B52, RC-135, and E-6B airframe. He additionally holds 500 hours of combat flight time in Southwest Asia, the Balkans, and Horn of Africa with a further specialization in military aircraft accident investigation and recovery (Department of the Air Force 2020). The author submitted a series of questions along with the available data from the crash to BG Boswell to provide an expert witness product that can provide theories on why the crash occurred and the aircraft's current disposition on the lakebed.

3.5 Pedestrian Archaeological Survey

A pedestrian archaeological survey of the Badin Lake region was conducted from 13-15 September 2021 consisting of a seven-person archaeological team from ECU. The days were organized to visit the town, the Badin Museum, alleged crash witness site locations, and other points of interest in the town. The primary intent was to elicit sources for oral histories. A secondary objective included identifying/recording artifacts and sites tied to the B-25 crash. And

a tertiary objective was to understand the memorialization of the event from the community's perspective.

Contact was established with the lead director of the Badin Museum, Dale Ward, to establish where the museum could assist in research as well as how the archaeological team could further assist the museum in its interpretation of the B-25 crash. Mr. Ward was presented with a general intent of what the team wanted to achieve and set about identifying people of interest to interview about the crash. Mr. Ward additionally made sure the team was guided to artifacts and materials that would further assist in researching the Badin Bomber.

The team sought out the contemporary physical positions of witnesses at the time of the crash based on prior gathered evidence. GPS data was taken for later triangulation of aircraft witness positions. The team also conducted an area search near the dock based on information provided by Tony Hill about a survey marker possibly relating that the crash is located nearby (Pers Comm. Tony Hill 2021). The team made a visual note of abandoned buildings that could lead to crash artifact locations, as local informants suggested some materials may remain stored in old buildings.

The team additionally surveyed an area located within the Hardaway site for possible artifacts tied to the crash and recovery based on the advisement of Coble and an interview with one of 2LT McDaniel's nephews, Tony Hill (Pers Comm. Coble 2021). The team also surveyed the Narrows hydroelectric dam to better understand the context of how ALCOA power operations were both an asset and a hindrance to search and recovery operations of the B-25. This had the added benefit of allowing the historians of Badin to share an important part of the Badin story with the team. In all occurrences, the team was reliant on the assistance of Badin residents to provide both verbal direction and physical guidance to points of interest.

3.6 Photogrammetry

Photogrammetry is a process through which researchers take multiple photos of an artifact to create a three-dimensional (3D) object (Fussell 1982:157). Computer software allowed the technique to advance to the point at which models are created in post processing allowing for sub-millimeter accuracy. Additionally, the 3D objects can be measured and researched without requiring the repeated handling of the artifact or presence onsite. This methodology was conducted on objects related to the Badin Lake incident.

The team utilized a Nikon D3400 SLR camera to collect photographs of known and suspected artifacts tied to the Badin Bomber located within the town museum and the surrounding area. The photographs were then loaded into modeling software Agisoft Metashape to generate a 3D models of all artifacts and sites recorded. Objects recorded within the Badin Museum include a possible nose wheel of the B-25 and a suspected radio tube. Outside on the northern boundary of the museum property a recording of the monument commemorating the pilots of PBJ-89050 was conducted. A few miles away the team took photographs of the McDaniel home and conducted a photogrammetric survey of a grave marker erected for 2LT McDaniel in the Palmerville Baptist Church cemetery. An analysis of the models allowed for an accurate identification of the suspected plane artifacts, and a clearer picture as to the nature of the crash and the memorial landscape.

3.7 Oral History

Prior to the pedestrian survey of Badin Lake, Badin locals were identified that could facilitate meeting with surviving witnesses or their descendants. Due to the realities of over a 75 year elapse in time, many of the available witnesses were children when the crash occurred, while others were familiar with the story as related from their parents, grandparents, or other relatives. Badin Museum curator and local resident Mr. Ward was critical in identifying individuals to interview. In preparation for the interviews, the team created fliers which were sent to the Museum for printed and email distribution to the community. An interview release form was created for participants to sign, and a set of guiding interview questions were created and used during each interview (Figure 14) (Appendix A and B). The interviews were conducted by the author, Dr. Jennifer McKinnon, and ECU graduate students participating in the field work. Interviews were designed as open-ended which included techniques such as showing unwavering and sincere interest, verbal cues such as “go on” and “uh-huh” allowing the participant to keep talking, nonverbal cues such as eye contact and inviting posture, and active listening. Recruitment utilized a snowball sampling method in which each participant led the researcher to other potential participants.



Figure 14. Flier created for distribution among Badin Lake community (P. Smith).

Interviews were conducted with Curt Dorsey, Larry Drye, Tony Hill, and David Summerlin (Appendix C). Their relationship to the town of Badin and the crash were established through generally free flowing discussions using the interview guidelines as a cornerstone. A secondary goal in the oral history collection was the opportunity to trigger memories of 8 June 1944 that the subjects may have not thought about in many years. While there are limitations to oral history interviews due to time and secondary eyewitness accounts, they do contribute details

of community members' experiences, what they deem important to convey, and the overall picture of what happened as the event occurred.

All interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder, as well as an iPhone for back-up. Handwritten notes were taken to augment the interviews. Recordings were later transcribed using transcription software programs Descript and Otter. To get accurate transcriptions, the team listened to the interviews checking line by line. Team members made corrections as needed where the software failed to properly identify words human listeners could transcribe. A great deal of effort was placed into maintaining the accent qualities of the interviewee's specific dialects within the transcriptions.

Combined the theoretical and methodological approaches of Community Archaeology and the collection of oral histories, pedestrian survey, and photogrammetry provide a new lens through which the locally important crash of the B-25 can be investigated. Although it has been some 75 years, the story of the crash holds a special place in the history of the regions and deserves to be recorded and preserved for past and future residents of the area.

CHAPTER FOUR: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

Despite being caught between the War Department's logistical nightmare of major Allied amphibious invasions in Western Europe (Operation OVERLORD) on 6 June 1944 and the invasion of Saipan (Operation FORAGER) on 15 June 1944, a great deal of historic data from both the U.S. military and national newspapers are available regarding the B-25 crash on 8 June 1944. Large amounts of data were recorded in both contemporary national and local newspapers articles and official military reports, but in some instances, they contradicted each other. Nevertheless, historical research combined paints a clearer picture of what occurred 8 June 1944.

4.2 Official military report results

Requests for primary records tied to the crash were sent to the U.S. National Archives office located in College Park, MD. Archivists were able to identify official military correspondence tied to the crash filed in Record Group 72: Records of Bureau of Aeronautics, and in the General Correspondence, 1943-45 under VPBJ1/L11-1. The available records provide critical data in determining the Navy's approach to the recovery mission in 1944, including both telegraph correspondence and an accident form. However, the records were not without their issues.

The aircraft trouble report form N. Aer. 339 was completely legible, with details of the airframe, serial numbers, and the two pilots' flight profile (Appendix E and F). It gave insights into the level of qualification of 2LT McDaniel who had 128.4 hours on the B-25 airframe in the three months leading to the accident, with a total 489.4 career flight hours for multiple airframes. Unfortunately, no hours were recorded for Ensign (ENS) Withrow. Rookie pilots were

considered to have between 300 to 600 hours of total flight hours during 2LT McDaniel's tour of duty with the USMC Reserves (Budge 2016).

The copies of telegraph correspondence between the EDU and higher commands in Cherry Point were unfortunately in extremely poor condition. They were originally printed on mimeograph paper, in a distinctive purple ink, and faded to the point of being illegible. This resulted in several attempts of contrast, brightness, and other settings to bring out legible data. Unfortunately, in two cases the results did not garner anything remotely readable aside from unique marks on the pages. Upon further investigation it was determined that Badin Museum retained legible copies of these military correspondence within their records. Comparative analysis was utilized to see if a methodology could be established that could allow for relevant data to be collected from the National Archives records.

By pulling the museum and National Archive versions of the telegraph side by side within photoshop as well as overlaying them on each other it was observed that there were unique markings or key positions of font on the archive originals that assisted in orienting them to the Badin copy. While there were some minor differences owing to differences in recording equipment for the sources, the relationship of the legible type relative to other syntax clues, such as the number combinations found the top left corner of the military correspondence that are unique within the U.S. Navy communication system, was similar. The first page worked effectively with this methodology. Unfortunately, the second page provided by the National Archives was in such a state of disrepair that it could not individually be adjusted to bring out legibility. Even more discouraging, there was no available version within the Badin Museum Archives to compare.

Through the comparative analysis, it was confirmed that the first Badin Museum telegraph matched the one located in the National Archives. However, while comparing the National Archives second telegraph to the one contained in the museum's records it was determined not only did they not match, but they were also different pages. The museum retained a page two that the National Archives did not have, and likewise the Archives retained a page two that the museum did not have. At this point it was determined there was a third page to the telegraphs. In the hunt for the missing third page, contact was made with Mr. William J. Sidoran III, base historical officer for MCAS Cherry Point. Mr. Sidoran searched through the available base archives and was able to find relatively legible copies of all three pages of the telegraph correspondence.

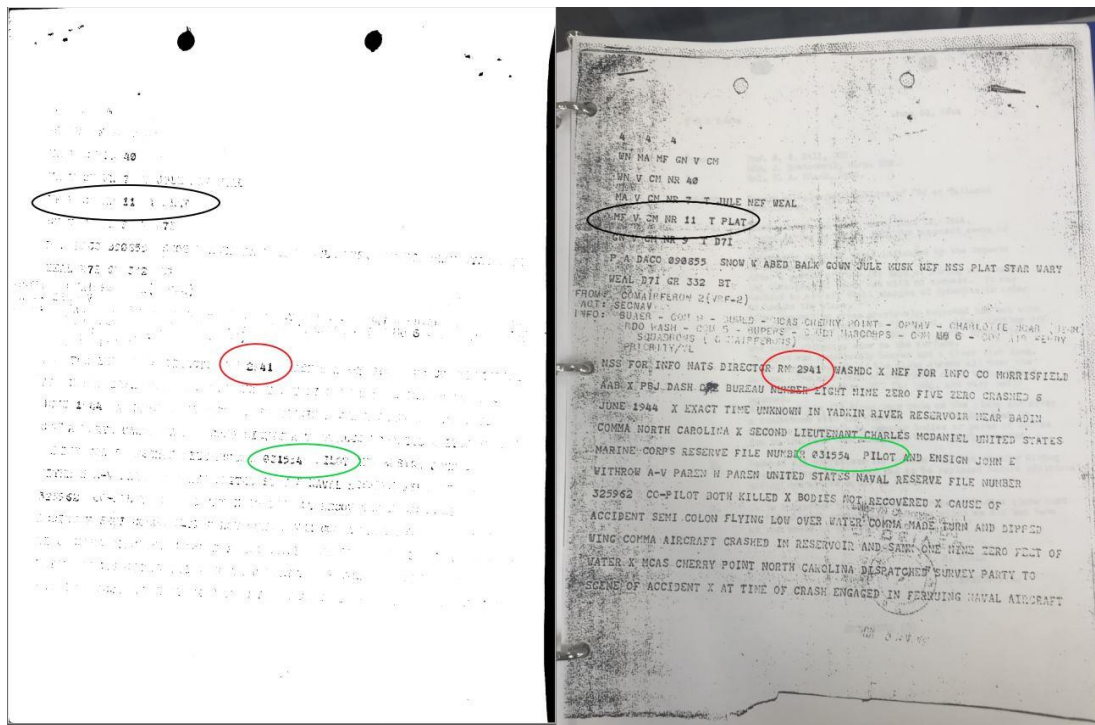


Figure 15. National Archives copy of Page one on left, Badin Museums on right (Photo from P. Smith).

Figure 15 depicts both the copy provided by the National Archives and the one retained by the Badin Museum archives. Sections that demonstrate high credibility that these are the same document are the cryptological markings on the top left demonstrating a match on the fifth line, and the legible letters found within the body of the communication that match in terms of special dimensions and letters. In all three examples these similarities are circled in black, red, and green respectively (Figure 15).

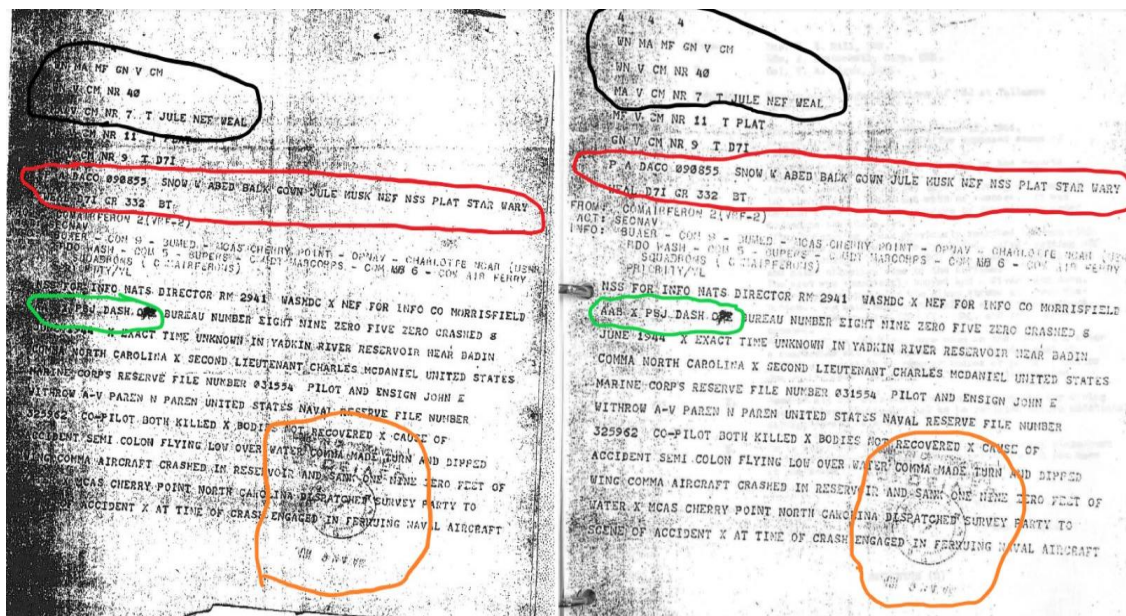


Figure 16. MCAS Cherry Point copy of page two on left, Badin Museum's on right (Photo from P. Smith).

In the above figure the copy of telegram page two from the Cherry Point archives, and the Badin Museum are compared. Key matches are marked in black, red, green, and orange confirming these are the same pages. The third telegram page, which was found to be in the worst condition, was compared between the copy found in from the National Archives and the

MCAS Archives. Key markings that confirm they are the same telegram were also marked in black, red, green, and orange as demonstrated in Figure 17.

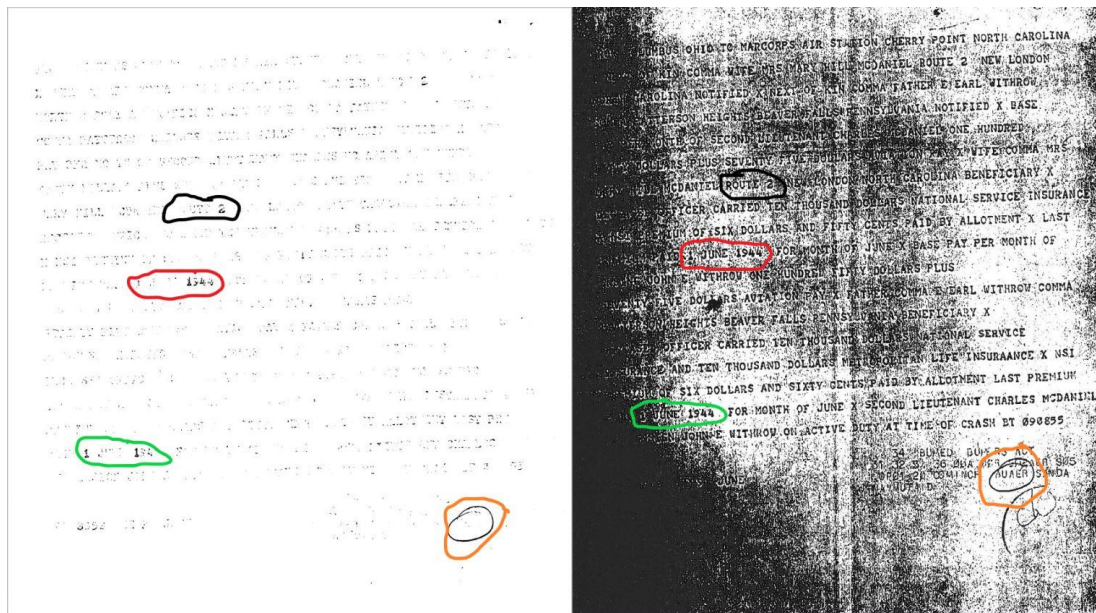


Figure 17. National Archives copy of page three on left, MCAS Cherry Point on right (Photo from P. Smith).

Analysis of the telegrams demonstrate the Marine Corps was made aware of the crash relatively quickly in relation to the incident, given the flow of information for this era. The first telegram page is a report to Naval Operations Command from MCAS Cherry Point on 8 June 1944 at 11:20 pm. It notifies the higher command that MCAS Cherry Point received a phone call from Morris AAF reporting that the B-25 had been lost. It does not provide a time for the crash, but reports the aircraft left Morris field at 12:23 pm for Cherry Point, NC, and was declared unaccounted for at 6:00 pm. This shows a significant time gap between witness statements of some salvage operations conducted by the U.S. Army and the Marine Corps official reports (Coble 2004:5). Based on the available telegram, the Marine Corps salvage party did not arrive

until 9 June 1944, but facts of the event were established based on what Morris field reported to MCAS Cherry Point.

The Army supplied information that the aircraft crashed into the reservoir due to flying low over the water and making a turn in which it dipped a wing into the water. Of note, the Army also determined that the airplane had crashed into 190 ft. of water, a figure that would vary significantly report to report. Neither the Army nor the Marine Corps was able to establish a timeframe for when the B-25 crashed into the reservoir, and it could be presumed they were processing witness statements. One thing is for certain in the documents however, the crash was so destructive as to erase all hope of rescuing 2LT McDaniel or ENS Withrow. The first telegram from June 8th describes the situation succinctly, “no personnel saved, and no bodies recovered” (MCAS Cherry Point 1944).

Finding a legible page three of the telegram collection brought forward the realization that pages two and three were part of one full telegram communication that are referred to as “telegram two” hereafter. Telegram two appears to have been sent on 9 June 1944 at 8:55 am on behalf of the two servicemen’s assigned unit, VRF-2. It appears that at this point in the timeline, the entire command hierarchy of aviation from Morris Army Airfield through VRF-2 all the way to Navy Operations was aware of the incident based on the “INFO” line of the telegram.

The telegram establishes that the command at VRF-2 still had not established a time for when the aircraft crashed into what it referred to as the “Yadkin River Reservoir near Badin” (VRF-2, 1944:1). Interestingly, telegram two acknowledged for the first time, in an official capacity, that both pilots were killed in the crash. It also revealed that a survey party was dispatched to the scene of the accident, which corroborates information revealed during one of the ECU team’s interviews in Badin. The final page of telegram two provided information on

2LT McDaniel, and ENS Withrow's next of kin, life insurance, and base pay due at time of death. It also informed that both were on active duty at the time of the crash, which is an important distinction as it directly affects the type of compensation their families received.

The records pertaining to MCAS Cherry Point operations officer LTC Black and the base commander COL Conradt appear to be disjointed from the timeline by a few days owing to the routing process of official correspondence. In some instances, it appears that they made reports before the recovery teams located in Badin. This could be due to possible erroneous dates found stamped on EDU records related to the recovery operation.

COL Conradt's correspondence to the Chief of Naval Operations on 28 June 1944, reports that base aviation operations initiated a lost plane procedure at 2:00 pm on 8 June 1944 "when it became apparent that the PBJ Aircraft Bureau Number 89060 was an hour overdue" (Conradt 1944:1). At 4:00 pm MCAS station operations received a phone call from Morris Field base operations that a B-25 type aircraft had crashed into Badin Lake at 1:00 pm. The telegrams available do not provide an exact time for when the aircraft hit the water implying that COL Conradt was implementing data provided by the initial investigation team.

The Cherry Point Marine Corps survey party, in tandem with the U.S. Army, convoyed out on 9 June 1944 and returned to Cherry point on 10 June 1944. They positively identified the aircraft by the property acceptance form that floated to the surface of the lake. This was the handwritten signature of 2LT McDaniel in accordance with military policy that requires him to assume all liability for sensitive government property as annotated by serial number. The survey team also reported that they believed that salvage was impossible due to the aircraft being in 150 ft. of water and MCAS Cherry Point not having sufficient equipment or qualified divers to initiate dive missions. There is no explanation for the discrepancy in depth when this

correspondence is compared to the first telegram in which the depth is stated as 190 ft., but it does imply that the Army must have conducted their own survey on 8 June 1944.

Conradt seems to have sent a request for the specialized skills of the EDU the same day he received the marines' de-brief recommendations on 10 June. By the afternoon of the following day, his office received a phone call that aircraft transportation be sent to Anacostia, Virginia (VA) by 10:00 am 11 June 1944, to pick up and transport the EDU to Cherry Point. Conradt's report further revealed that the EDU was given access to a B-25 on the base to familiarize themselves with the layout of the aircraft prior to their convoy out to Badin, NC (Conradt 1944:2). Conradt's report finished with information from the EDU stating they spent a week attempting to salvage and discontinued once conditions became too hazardous. The report also adjusted the depth at which the aircraft was located once again, stating 134 ft., with 10 ft. of silt and uncut trees varying 20 to 50 ft. in height near the crash site.

The copy of ENS Hill and Kratochvil's official correspondence to MCAS Operations officer LTC Black goes into further detail of the crash and is the data COL Conradt referenced in his report to higher command. The report shows that ENS Hill was the commander of the diving party. They set to work at 8:00 am on 12 June 1944 with a team on a diving barge jumping targets based on reports from eyewitnesses to the crash. They conducted four days' worth of search operations utilizing grapnel hooks with no success which was the catalyst for them to begin using dynamite. The two men report that their team utilized 250 lbs. of dynamite total, in an allegedly systematic approach, setting five total charges at 50 lbs. each in what they believed was the crash line for the airplane. Sources derived from local newspapers reported that they used far more dynamite than this (*Stanley News and Press* 1944:1). At the fifth iteration they hit something that resulted in hydraulic oil and paint floating to the surface. Upon buoying the

location of the debris, they immediately deployed EDU divers. The team determined that they found the fuselage of the aircraft and reported its remnants as 25 ft. long. After holding six dives the team believed it was impossible to recover the bodies due to the condition of the plane being so badly crushed (Hill and Kratochvil 1944). This is an interesting determination considering the water in Badin Lake is incredibly tannic and has a large degree of particulate effecting visibility. This means that the dive team likely had physically touched the aircraft wreckage to make the determination that it had been severely crushed.



Colonel P. E. Conradt, Deputy Commander of Marine Air Bases and Commanding Officer of U. S. Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point, N. C.

Figure 18. 1944 Photo of MCAS Cherry Point Base Commander COL P.E. Conradt (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps).

A copy of a report dated 20 June 1944 from the salvage operations team commanded by Warrant Officer (WO) E.E. Boone Jr. was provided from the MCAS Cherry Point archives. The first page of the report appears to be missing, the second page has an operational timeline, and the third contains evidence. (Table 1) is a reconstructed timeline based on both WO Boone and ENS Hill's reports.

Table 1. Timeline of events.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activity</u>
<u>11 June 1944</u>	Time indeterminate, salvage and dive team arrives in Badin via truck convoy from MCAS Cherry Point
<u>12 June 1944</u>	At 8:00 am the team begins four days of searching for aircraft wreckage based on eyewitness reports.
<u>13 June 1944</u>	No record of the team's actions on this day has been found. It can be extrapolated that they continued their systematic search based on crash witness line of sight reports.
<u>14 June 1944</u>	Team drags grapnel hooks along the lake bottom based on triangulated lines of sight from witnesses, it loses four grapnel hooks to trees, but determines depths vary from 60 to 165 ft. in the search area.
<u>15 June 1944</u>	The team continues dragging grapnel hooks with no success. In the afternoon search operations are changed over to a process of systematic explosives use. The team used 85 sticks of dynamite based on the line of sight of a Badin resident and witness to the crash, Mr. Vinters. The team meets with no success.
<u>16 June 1944</u>	The team purchases 1,000 lbs. of dynamite from Stanley Hardware Company located in nearby Albemarle, NC. They make ten charges containing 25 lbs. of explosives each setting them off on lines of sight with negative results.
<u>17 June 1944</u>	The team creates five charges containing 50 lbs. of explosive each. The first charge meets with no result, but the team selects an

	arbitrary line based on a collection of all data to that point and releases the charge. Hydraulic fluid begins rising to the lake surface. The team then releases charges three and four to a depth of 150 ft. and at a 45-degree angle. The fourth charge brings up paint that is blue on one side, yellow on the other. The site is immediately marked with a buoy.
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WO Boone reiterated the six dives the search team reported in their correspondence with higher command. Boone's report further revealed that a malfunctioning air compressor resulted in one of the divers falling unconscious while searching the wreckage. This undoubtedly put pressure on the team to wrap up operations given the low visibility and high danger of entanglement in the dark depths of the lake. Boone reported that the team was able to determine the aircraft nose and cockpit through feel but could not find any evidence of the bodies inside the aircraft. It should be noted that the salvage and the dive team's reports are in agreement with each other that the fuselage appeared to be badly crushed.

The team discontinued the operation believing that further specialized equipment involving pontoon style buoys and lift bags were needed to recover the aircraft. Unfortunately, there is no record of the appendix referenced in the Navy and Marine Corps reports that gives the exact location of wreckage. Nor is there any evidence from any of the available archives in Washington D.C., Badin Museum, or MCAS Cherry Point that the original copy was ever turned over.

WO Boone outlined in the closing section of his report a few points of interest. He was clearly in communication with 2LT McDaniel's parents, and his wife Mary. Both parties expressed a desire to see 2LT McDaniel buried in a grave plot nearby. 2LT McDaniel's father stated that he wanted to view his son's remains should they be recovered. Additionally, Boone

related that Badin locals, Barrett Crook and Earl Beck, informed him that they had picked up several pieces of wreckage and turned them over to Army officials, including a piece of flesh or skin 6 in. by 2 in. and attached to a piece of smooth board, a 30-gallon aluminum tank, a first-aid kit, a GI shirt sleeve, and one brown sock (Boone 1944:3).

COL Conradt's 15 July 1944 correspondence addressed to the Chief of Naval Operations summarizing the incident is the last military record in relation to the crash that has so far been found. His report confirmed that the plane did receive some sort of salvage during the recovery operation. However, Conradt paradoxically stated that the aircraft disintegrated on impact, while subordinate communiqués state the fuselage was intact. Conradt speculated that because wreckage was found in the still standing trees, there remained a possibility that the pilots have become entangled in them. He further commented that because no set of chairs had been recovered it remains plausible the pilots were still strapped to their chairs (Conradt 1944). Conradt concluded that any further attempts to recover the pilots would be simply too dangerous for divers and put forth the recommendation that no further attempts at recovery be attempted.

No further documentation related to the crash was produced until 1950. Marine Corps CPT Belcon Lidyard sent Mary McDaniel a copy of her husband's military service record and a certificate recognizing his sacrifice to the U.S. No further attempt at recovery was made by the military until almost 50 years later, through the dedicated efforts of Mr. Bill Love.

Mr. Love and his colleague Floyd Wilson, then mayor of Richfield and president of the Carolinas Historic Aviation Commission, were instrumental in initiating the U.S. Navy operations in 1993 and 1998 (Love 1998; Wilson 1992). Mr. Love's research into the crash prompted the opening of a new search by the U.S. Navy in the early 1990s. Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) Team 10 led the mission starting with their pre-mission survey

of Badin Lake from 5-7 February 1993 conducted by Radioman Chief Petty Officer (RMC) Roy L. Dowel and Electronics Technician Petty Officer 2nd Class (ET2) Roberta P. Jones (Kemp 1993:1). On 5 April 1993 the team inserted into Badin and established their command center.

According to the team SITREP, the EODMU was unable to begin morning operations on 6 April due to high winds and heavy rain. The team opted to receive a briefing that included a history of the lake and the B25 from ALCOA Public Relations Department. The team attempted to conduct afternoon operations but reported their boat engines were sluggish. The return of rain resulted in the team canceling remote sensing operations for the day (Kemp 1993:1).

On 7 April the detachment conducted search operations in Area A near the river channel off Palmer Mountain. The team met with trouble from their starboard engine stalling. Their port engine fared no better, running consistently under its optimal rating. They reported no contacts from their sonar in the search area (Kemp 1993:2).

On 8 April the team extended their Area A search to southeastward towards Uwharrie Point. This may refer to the Hardaway Site which would have been in their sight from the Palmer Mountain area of operations. In addition to the crew, a documentary filmmaker was present on the boat during the mission. The team identified no targets of interest in the morning but experienced significant equipment issues with the boat and their recorder. The team identified debris north of Palmer Mountain in the afternoon, but it was not consistent with aircraft debris (Kemp 1993:3).

The team almost met with catastrophic failure on 9 April after suffering from a combined issue of events. Engine trouble continued to plague the boat along with battery overheating issues, when their tow fish hooked a submerged tree in Area A while returning to the marina from Area B - located north of Badin Dam, damaging the tow cable (Kemp 1993:3). The

detachment observed an anomaly in Area C located southwest of Uwharrie Point consistent with the approximate length and width of a B-25 fuselage. The team departed on 12 April having found no further significant contacts. In their after-action review (AAR) the team felt that the Badin community was incredibly supportive of the operation and noted that all residents were consistent in where they believed the aircraft crash (Kemp 1993:6).

Research and operations tied to the crash did begin again until almost a decade later. Bill Love sent out letters in the summer of 1998 to Department of Defense (DOD) Personnel Command in Alexandria, VA and the EDU now located in Panama City, Florida. (Love 1998) It is not clear from the available letters if Bill met with any success, but it is clear his intention was to recover the remains and restore the aircraft for museum display purposes in Albemarle.

ECU Maritime Studies program graduate Coble was visiting with her parents in Albemarle when she learned about the Badin Bomber. While attending an Albemarle church with her parents in 1998 Coble was told the story of the aircraft by a parishioner (Coble 2004:7). Coble drew on her experiences of working on a PBY-5 wreck from the Pearl Harbor attack to develop a plan to provide some sort of closure to the families and community around Badin Lake. Coble set out to provide this closure by answering why the aircraft crashed and recovering the two servicemen's remains for proper military burial (Coble 2004:7).

After some initial research Coble reached out to the local community for help. Coble contacted Mayor Wilson to share her plans and get his input for a new search mission. Mayor Wilson offered the full assistance of the Carolinas Historic Aviation Commission (CHAC). Meanwhile, Coble's father Louis Coble garnered the support of the Yadkin/Pee Dee Lakes Project, now known as Central Park NC, while looking for maps of Badin Lake (Coble 2004:8).

Both non-profit organizations were cornerstones in Coble's effort to lobby local community support for the Badin Bomber search.

Coble obtained grassroots logistical support from various regional sources to support the search mission. Retired ECU professor Dr. Gordon P. Watts provided logistical support through his company Tidewater Atlantic research (Coble 2004:9). Additionally, Coble obtained a crew from Southern Oceans Archaeological Research (SOAR) consisting of John W. Morris III and Marianne Franklin to round out the search team (Coble 2004:8). Locals of Badin Lake supplied lodging, boats, and crew for the operation.

Coble's search for the Badin Bomber was almost derailed before it began. On 17 February 1999, ALCOA informed Coble's team that it would need a 5M dollar insurance policy prior to the operation starting. ALCOA inexplicably reversed its stance the following day leaving Coble scrambling to reorganize the team (*Asheville Citizen Times* 1999:B3). ALCOA informed the team that it would reevaluate the need for insurance upon the aircraft's discovery.

The four-day operation began by conducting a magnetometer survey of an area of about 2.25 mi² in the south-western quadrant of Badin Lake (Figure 6). The magnetometer was an EG&G Geometrics 866 dual channel operating at a depth of 15 to 20 ft. above the surface bottom, along transects spaced at 50 ft. intervals (Coble 2004:36). The survey region was selected based on previous military reports and eyewitness descriptions of the crash area. The equipment picked up several ferrous targets on the first two days.

On day three of the operation the team had access to a side-scan sonar courtesy of the Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC) Underwater Archaeology Branch (UAB). Despite some equipment issues the team covered the areas previously investigated by magnetometer. Unfortunately, only trees and boulders were spotted by the one-day side scan

sonar operation (Coble 2004:10). Later analysis by NHHHC remote sensing specialist Steve Schmidt determined that the side scan sonar was not setup properly for part of the search and may not have covered portions of the lake bottom (Coble 2004:33). Day four the team completed magnetometer operations, with some promising results.

Coble's team proceeded with a follow-up investigation into the crash the following February. However, much of the information provided by locals seemed jumbled or contradicted others' information. During post-processing local Badin artist Roger Thomas reached out to Coble and offered to paint a rendition of the bomber flying over Badin Lake (Figure 20). The painting itself appears to depict PBJ-1H-89050 flying low above the water with Palmer Mountain/Island to the front and Hardaway Point to the rear. Many eyewitnesses believed the image gave an accurate depiction of the altitude and direction of travel for the B-25 as it travelled over Badin Lake (Coble 2004:11). Thomas believed selling limited editions of the print could help raise funds for the continuation of the project. In addition to the prints, Thomas allowed affordable t-shirts to be created utilizing his original artwork of the Badin Bomber. The print proved popular and sales raised several thousands of dollars for the operation.

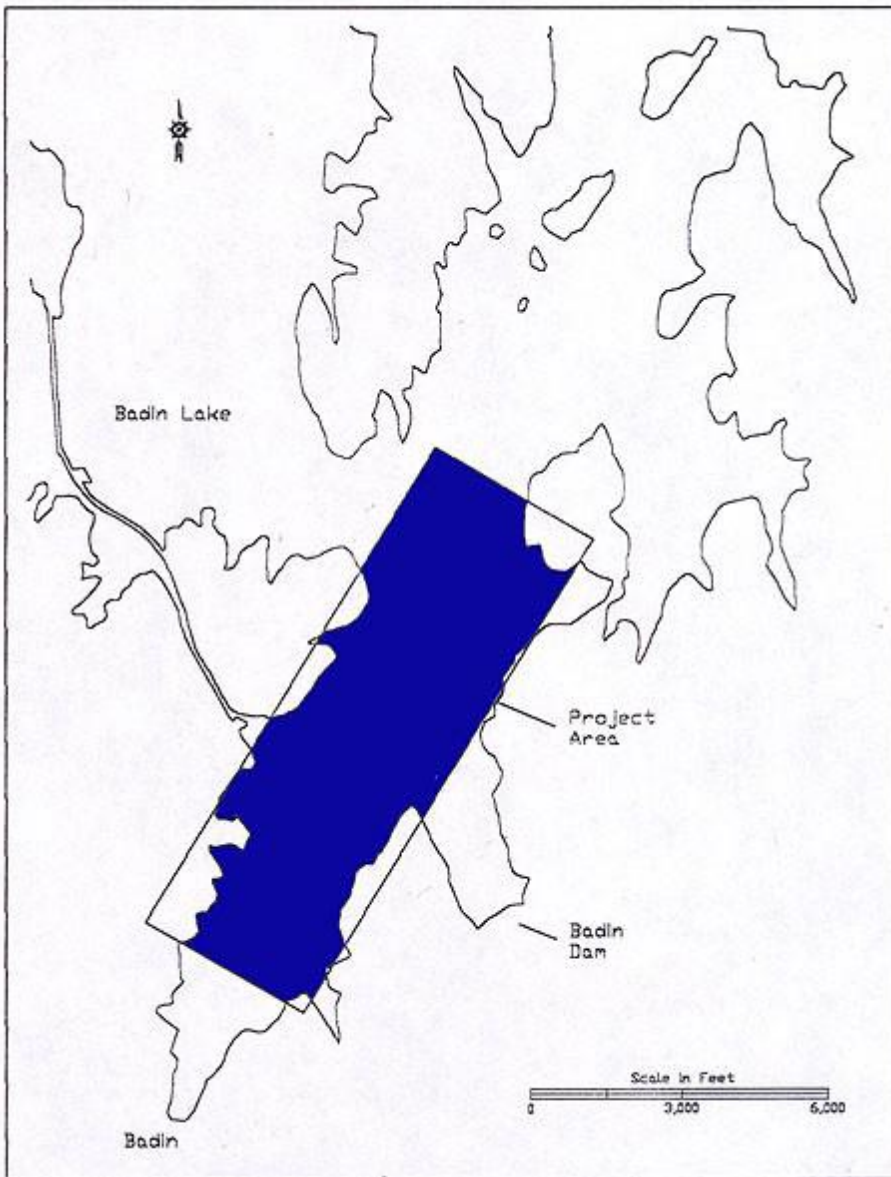


Figure 19. Coble team magnetometer survey (Photo from W. Coble).



Figure 20. Final Run (Artwork by Roger Thomas).

According to Coble, the team's fundraising operations had the unintended consequence of attracting salvor attention. In July of 1999, a company from California known as Vintage Military Aircraft Recovery (VMAR) tried to persuade the town of Badin to allow them to recover and restore the plane. The town logically responded in a negative manner when the company informed town leaders that the plane would be returned to Badin for a price (Coble 2004:11-12). The CEO of VMAR contacted a Yadkin/Pee Dee Lakes Project representative in which they "painted a clear picture to me that they will come here and get the bomber, and no one is going to stop them" (Sams 1999). In a more bizarre instance, two local men named Dan Carlisle and Mack House launched their own search operation, having been indignant towards press statements about Coble's efforts.

In late November 1999, various newspapers in NC reported a commercial dive team local to Stanly County had located the Badin Bomber. The team, consisting of Deep Submarine Research Vessel (DSRV-7) CEO House and employee Carlisle, claimed they found the site on

27 November 1999 and placed a small marker on the plane's wing proclaiming, "let no one dishonor this site" (Sams 1999). The Carlisle House team operated on SCUBA from a 17-foot wet submarine allegedly equipped with sonar (Coble 2004:12). Coble met the men at the Badin Lake docks upon their return from one of their night operations. Coble reported that the two radiated hostility towards her and refused to provide any information (Coble 2004:12; Sams 1999).

Carlisle and House's claim was initially met with some media fanfare but later followed with justifiable skepticism. Neither party shared the position of the aircraft wreck and refused to answer inquiries from NHC. Inexplicable was House's assertion that he reported the aircraft to a contact in the FBI because of dangerous materials found on the plane (Henderson 1999:2B). Adding further fuel to the fire was the question of both men's integrity regarding their false claims of alternatively being former Navy SEALs or Green Berets. Neither man could provide any proof of their discovery, nor claims of official correspondence with federal government entities. Coble believed this incident was a key impact indicator of project interest diminishing significantly (Coble 2004:12). Following this event Coble gained employment with the NHHC, something Carlisle and House used as a justification of their continued refusal to share information (Sams 1999:5A).

In the beginning of 2000, because of Bill Love's correspondence and Coble's new position networking, EODMU-10 initiated a follow up mission to their 1993 excursion. Lodging donations from Whip-O-Will campground and fuel provided via CHAC's fundraisers for the bomber search mitigated costs for the military team where legally able (Coble 2004:13). To avoid complications with salvors and media previously faced by Coble's team, EODMU-10 purposely maintained a small footprint during the search operation. Equipped with a side-scan

sonar EODMU-10 set out to cover all of Coble team's survey area including an expanded zone (Figure 21).

EODMU-10 only had three days to revisit a mission they had last conducted in 1993. Unfortunately for the team, they met with far more technical difficulties than their predecessors. The first day of the operation the team's side-scan sonar computer was damaged, the GPS glitched, one of the towing cables stopped working, and the keyboard had to be replaced. Day two the boat damaged one of its engines when it ran into a submerged hill and the team was forced to conduct their remote sensing survey on one engine. On day three, two more towing cables malfunctioned and one of the sensors became stuck in a still standing but inundated tree (Coble 2004:13-14).

Despite these setbacks the EODMU-10 team found workaround solutions. Their efforts resulted in potential anomalies. The sonar also picked up several still standing trees below the lake surface, along with craters and felled trees supporting evidence of the Navy utilizing dynamite in the 1944 operation (Coble 2004:21). EODMU-10 found three anomalies of interest within Coble's original search site.

Coble later concluded that the B-25 hit the lake surface at a high rate of speed. The combination of a debris field, the suspected wreck site orientation, and lack of human remains led Coble to believe the B-25 was obliterated. She still believes the use of a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) to visually inspect the anomalies could provide conclusive evidence of the Badin Bomber's resting site. Upon completion of her 2004 NHHC report, Coble believed it was unlikely the two servicemen's remains could be found and used the remaining funds to dedicate a stone memorial to the two men (Coble 2004:29-30).

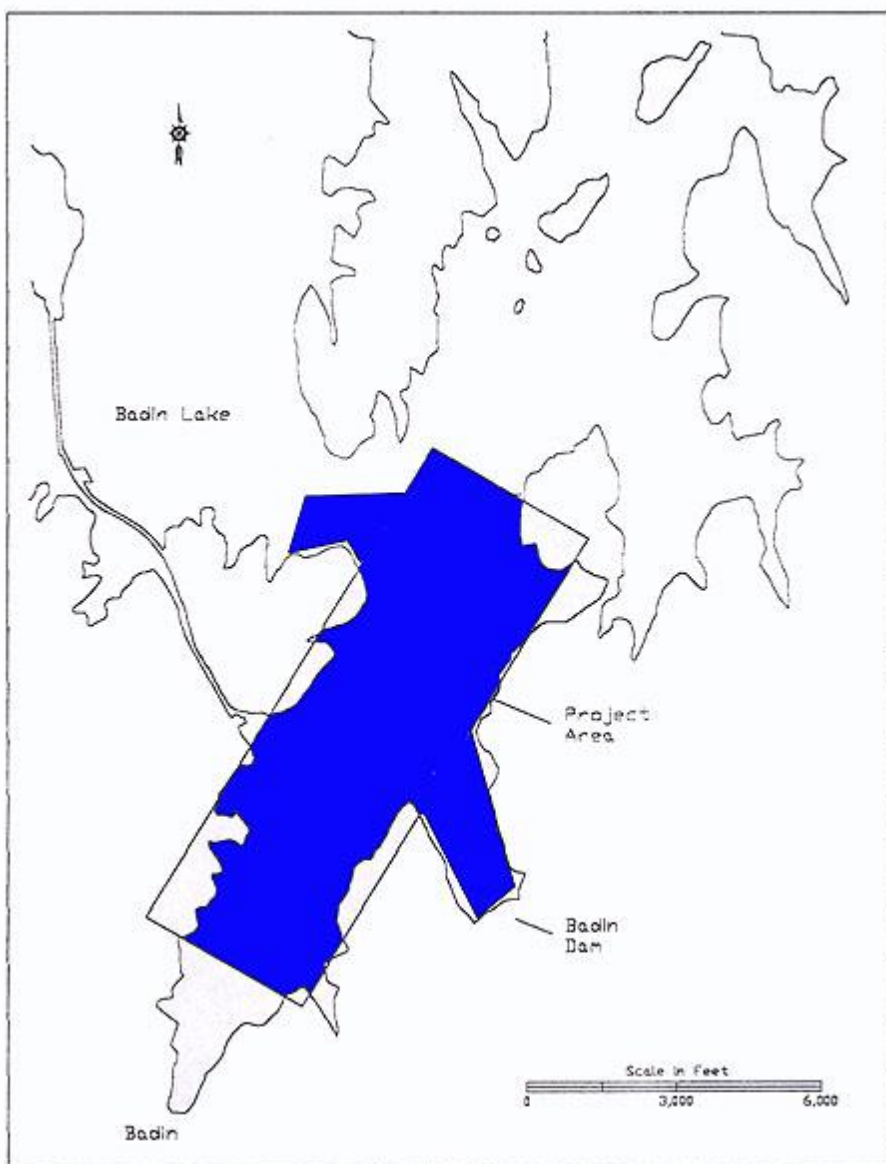


Figure 21. EODMU-10 team side-scan sonar survey 2000 (Photo from W.Coble).

Concurrent to Coble's research, a museum dedicated to the history of Badin was started in 1998. Initiated by two long time Badin residents with a hobby for antique collecting, the museum contains artifacts from Native American pre-history all the way through ALCOA's presence in the area (Pers. Comm. Dale Ward, 2020). The main museum office is currently

housed in a former Tallassee Power Company rental office from 1916 that also was later used as a kindergarten and as a town community building (Pers. Comm. Dale Ward, 2020).

4.3 Stanly County, Badin, and newspaper archives results

Review of newspaper archives revealed a surprising amount of information surrounding the Badin Bomber. The nature of the wreck and the emotional response to how it came rest at the bottom of a humanmade lake seem to spark the imagination of the public from 1944 to the present day. Every decade it seemed like newspapers highlighted the story of the Badin Bomber and its ill-fated journey along the NC countryside.

Archival research at the Stanly County and Badin museums provided a surprising amount of information surrounding the B-25 crash. Personal items such as a copy of Rebecca McDaniel's poem dedicated to her older brother (2LT McDaniel), were found within the files at the Stanly County Museum. Additionally, clippings specific to the crash from the Stanly County Newspaper that were otherwise unavailable via other online resources were located in both museums.

The first news stories that reference the 8 June 1944 crash began appearing the following day on 9 June 1944 in state news sources. A newspaper based out of Winston Salem seems to have the earliest details and witness statements related to the crash from its evening edition on 9 June. "The plane came over Badin at a very low level and a moment later banked sharply over the lake, the wingtip dipping into the water, ploughing into the river channel where it is 300 yards wide" (*The Sentinel* 1944:3). Other NC newspapers appear to copy *The Sentinel's* report while national stories seem to plug in other details specific to the pilots, but do not provide the same detailed information of the accident.

The *Stanly News and Press* appears to have provided the most detailed information related to the crash that correlates to official military reports. In one example reports on wreck site depths of 140 to 160 ft. of water appear consistent with official military reports (Coble 2004; *Stanly News and Press* 1944a:1). Yet newspapers such as the *Charlotte Observer* vary wildly on the depth of the lake, reporting a maximum lake depth of 60 ft. in one instance while changing their position only a few days later that the plane rests at 140 ft. (*Charlotte Observer* 1944:3). This seems to imply that newspapers geographically closer to the accident site provide more accurate reporting. This is supported by articles from newspapers based in Albemarle, Winston-Salem, and Greensboro.

Much of the reporting by the *Stanly News and Press* correlates with official military reports. However, the author of the articles seemed to make implication at several points that the amount of dynamite used to find the plane could be responsible for the poor state the EDU discovers the airplane in. One story reports that the EDU utilized 2,700 lbs. of dynamite which does not correlate with the amount accounted for within the official reports (*Stanly News and Press* 1944b:1). The amount discrepancy is noteworthy when looking at EDU official reports that explain only 250 lbs. were utilized. It could be the result of “a fog of war” situation in which the team reported estimated explosives that varied as reports move further in time from the event, or the possibility exists the EDU purposefully underreported their use of dynamite out of fear the team was responsible for further damage to the aircraft. However, the evidence strongly favors that the EDU followed a systematic approach and their reports are thorough enough to strongly challenge any theories on a coverup. They risked their lives in an attempt to recover both pilots’ remains, utilizing dive technology that was on the cutting edge of both theory and capability.

Throughout the analysis of these news resources a character appeared with enough frequency to bear recognition in this research. Aviation historian, WWII combat veteran, and long-time resident of nearby Albemarle, Bill Love, spent decades researching the crash and its possible location. The story may well have been left to time were it not for his concerted efforts. Love was working at his father's grocery store not far from the town square when the B-25 passed overhead (Ferrera 1993). The event kickstarted a lifelong enthusiasm for aviation and researching the story of the Badin Bomber. Throughout archival research conducted in the Stanly County newspaper archives, several of Love's handwritten notes were found on multiple resources. Additionally, copies of letters he sent to the Departments of the Army and Navy requesting assistance were located. One of the more interesting items found in the files related to Mr. Love was a notecard that appeared to have his handwriting on it (Figure 22). The notecard contains a military grid coordinate and was found behind a copy of the reports EODMU completed in 1993 and 2000.

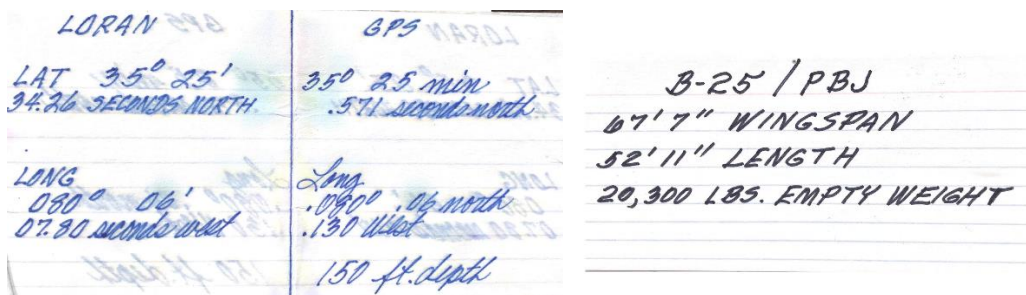


Figure 22. Note card showing possible grid coordinate location of crash site. (Photo by P. Smith).

When placed into a map program, the coordinate 35° 25' 34.571" N, 80° 06' 07.130" W matches up to a suspected position for the crash site and within the parameters of Coble's search. Given that GPS-style grids and LORAN conversions were not readily available at the time, it is

reasonable to suspect that a representative from Coble's team or the U.S. Navy provided the information to Mr. Love.

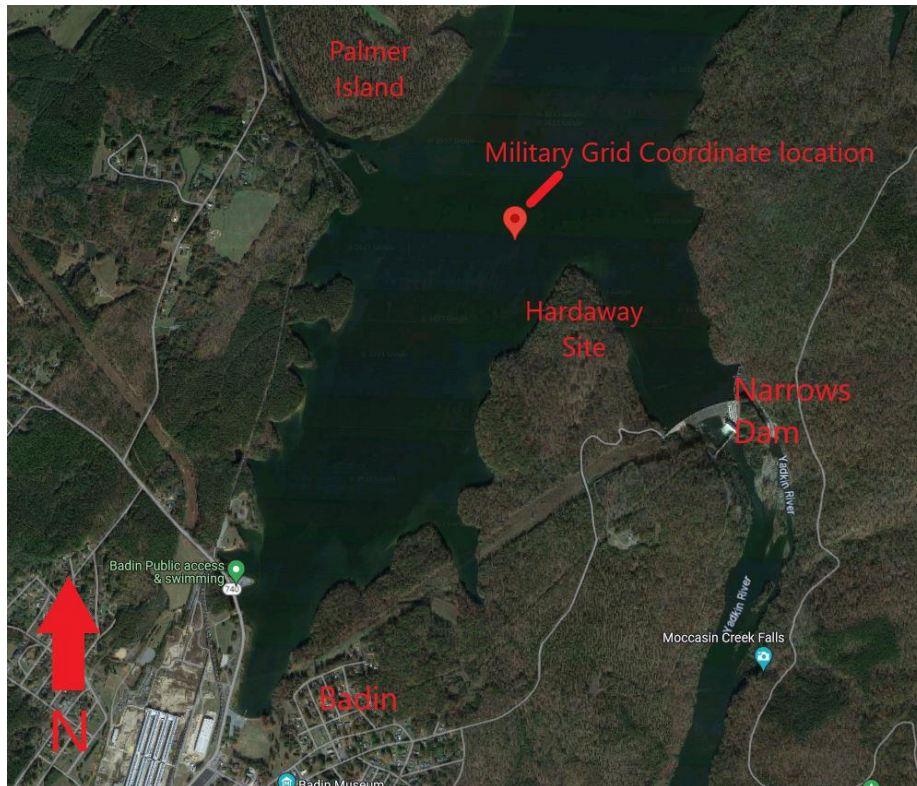


Figure 23. Google Map showing the grid location from Bill Love's notecard (Photo by P. Smith).

4.4 Oral History Analysis

The interviews with residents of Badin proved valuable in contextualizing the incident and its relationship to the town. The information the interviewees provided support for official military correspondence from 1944. While the data was limited due to the passage of time and dwindling witnesses to the crash, it still proved valuable in determining the general area of the airplane crash.

The first interview was conducted with Mr. Hill, a longtime resident of Badin and the nephew of 2LT McDaniel's widow, Mary Elizabeth. Apparent at the beginning of the interview was Mr. Hill's love and enthusiasm for the surrounding region's history. Much of what he discussed with the team reinforced historical data about the area. Mr. Hill confirmed that his family was one of the older families in the region arriving in Palmerville when the Whitney Dam was initially built (Pers Comm. Tony Hill 2021). Mr. Hill provided needed context on the long history of company towns tied to the generation of electricity the Pee Dee River provided. Mr. Hill described Palmerville Church as being the oldest remaining building of the village of Palmerville and detailed how the population drifted southward with the establishment of the Narrows Dam construction. Mr. Hill related the story of how 2LT McDaniel would visit his wife during stop-offs near Charlotte while on Cherry Point aircraft ferry missions from Ohio. Mr. Hill confirmed much of the same story found in other narratives, that as a sign to his wife, 2LT McDaniel would fly the airplane around the area three times and dip his wings. According to Mr. Hill, a local woman, Ms. Roosevelt was fishing in the lake and witnessed the incident. He related that she was standing on the point and the aircraft crashed right in front of her. This anecdote lined up to the grid coordinates located in the Stanly County archives. The "point" Mr. Hill refers to is likely the tip of the peninsula of the Hardway Site referred to in Figure 23. Mr. Hill states that Ms. Roosevelt saw one of the engines "smokin' and stallin' and it was skippin'" (Pers Comm. Tony Hill 2021). He then continued that the airplane appeared to nosedive.

While it must be considered that Mr. Hill's information is all second hand from his father and other community members, parts of his information on a Ms. Roosevelt were corroborated. He recalled she was an older African American woman from Badin. An article related to the crash from the *The Salisbury Post* dated 9 June 1944, does confirm an African American woman

engaging in sustenance fishing witnessed the crash (*The Salisbury Post* 1944:1). Interestingly, she may have given a partially false name as the reporter names a Ms. Jean Perry or there could have been a second woman fishing. This could very well be the Ms. Roosevelt that Hill is referring to, considering that fishing on the lake was illegal as was most boating due to fears of German saboteurs attacking the dam (Coble 2004:26; *Winston-Salem Journal* 1945a:15, *Winston-Salem Journal* 1945b:1).

Mr. Hill has spent his personal time researching the crash and believed that a mechanical failure of some sort contributed to his uncle's death. He stated that information he obtained from the Navy described features with the B-25's fuel system that could cause the engines to stall in situations requiring quick maneuvers. Mr. Hill contended that the design was flawed and would not operate as intended, causing the second engine that was temporarily stalled to seize up. He believed this correlated to what Ms. Roosevelt may have observed in 1944 with the engine smoking in a fight to turn back on.

While Mr. Hill is not a primary witness to the accident, he has received oral histories from the Badin residents that witnessed the crash, in addition to recalling the name of the person that was fishing when the crash occurred. Additionally, Mr. Hill recalled people in the town salvaging aircraft materials from the lake, including a tire. He told of a meeting between the Navy and family members of the Hills and McDaniel facilitated by Coble in which the Navy acknowledges the people of Badin as custodians of the site, however the Sunken Military Craft Act of 2004 still recognizes the U.S. Navy as the owners. Mr. Hill seems motivated to clear his uncle's name of any mishandling of the aircraft and has expressed interest in both the pilots' remains and the aircraft to be recovered if feasible.

The next interview conducted was with Mr. David Summerlin, a nearly lifelong resident of Badin, NC, having arrived in the town in 1941 with his father. Mr. Summerlin is also one of the key architects for the development of the Badin History Museum. Mr. Summerlin was about seven years old when the crash occurred. Mr. Summerlin resided at 55 Cedar Street at the time of the crash, approximately 1.3 mi. from the accident site on Badin Lake. He was home from school recovering from a mumps infection the morning of the incident. Mr. Summerlin recalled standing on his front porch when the B-25 flew over the general area of his home. Based on analysis of topographical maps showing Mr. Summerlin's childhood home and 2LT McDaniel's general flight plan, Mr. Summerlin had a relatively clear line of sight of the B-25's approach from the southwest as it made its circuit around Palmerville, Badin, and the lake.

According to Mr. Summerlin, the sound of an airplane flying over Badin would not have been that unusual during WWII. He did not recall anyone running out of their houses as the airplane passed or any commotion immediately after the aircraft fell into the lake. He also believed that nothing could have occurred on the lake without ALCOA's knowledge and that they would have been intimately involved in the U.S. Navy's search efforts. Mr. Summerlin recalled overhearing talk from other townspeople about parts of the plane being placed on military trucks but is unsure what became of them.

Mr. Summerlin represents a key aspect of the town of Badin. Many of his family members, including himself, have been employed by ALCOA at one time or another throughout their lives. The company was essentially the heart of the town keeping the various arteries functioning. Mr. Summerlin represents a custodian keeping the memory of the company town alive. He believes that the aircraft is better left in situ but seems interested in side-scan sonar images being done of the wreck site.

Curt Dorsey is another lifelong resident of Badin, owning the town restaurant and bar known as Loafers and Legends. He was responsible for rediscovering the nose wheel of the B-25 and facilitating its transfer to the museum. He currently lives in a home in Palmerville, remarkably close to Mary Elizabeth's home, where her family observed her husband's last moments in the sky. Many of his family members retold the story of the plane crash to him as a child. Mr. Dorsey recalled his grandfather saying he was present at the lake during the recovery attempt. According to his grandfather, quite a bit of debris washed up, including a leather flat bench seat that was kept in the attic of the family home while Mr. Dorsey was a child. He is uncertain of what became of the possible artifact.

Around 2011, while working as a realtor in Badin, Mr. Dorsey was selling a house when he was casually informed by the owner's son that they had a wheel from the airplane. Mr. Dorsey was initially skeptical of the claim, but when the resident pulled it out of a rustic barn in the backyard his interest was piqued. Mr. Dorsey noted that there were serial numbers on the wheel including a manufacturer's stamp from March of 1944. Feeling that the wheel was legitimate, Mr. Dorsey asked the gentleman if he wished to sell it or donate it to the Badin Museum. The gentleman informed them that he needed the money and sold the wheel for 20 dollars. Mr. Dorsey related that he was told the gentleman's grandfather had originally salvaged the wheel with landing gear attached when he saw it had washed onto the lakeshore. The grandfather presumably removed the landing gear and repurposed the wheel for his tractor. Mr. Dorsey suspected the grandfather used the wheel for several decades given how worn the rubber had become. He was unsure of what happened to the landing gear itself.

Mr. Dorsey provided a valuable paradigm because of his direct relationship with artifacts from the crash and his relationship with citizens in the area. He informed the team that a Mr.

Dees watched the aircraft fly over his field at the age of 12, and heard the airplane sputter, a point consistent from various witnesses and official military reports. Additionally, he provided more detail on why only two people witnessed the airplane crash into the lake. The lake was completely off limits to civilians for fishing or boating during the war because of the strategic importance of the Narrows Dam. According to Mr. Dorsey, ALCOA had a police force of 70 men, some heavily armed in several positions around the aluminum plant and dam at any given time. He stated that only two people, an older white male, and Ms. Roosevelt were fishing in the area. He recalled that they were fishing from the railroad tracks. If this is accurate, it could narrow down the position of the location of the two witnesses, as there are limited places for people to both access the lake for fishing and have a clear line of sight of the crash.

Mr. Dorsey believed that the EDU could have been trying to purposefully destroy the airplane given the amount of dynamite they used. His theory is that with the airplane was equipped with a Norden bombsight and the Navy wanted to destroy the sensitive item rather than risk espionage. These pieces of equipment were of intelligence value to the German military, so the theory is not outside of the realm of possibilities.

At five years old, Larry Drye was with his grandfather making a milk run the day after the crash occurred. Mr. Drye had been staying with his grandparents and mother in Badin while his father fought in the Pacific Theater as part of the U.S. Navy Seabees during the war. Larry and his grandfather were approaching Badin from the north having just made deliveries to the town of London or northern Palmerville. He remembered crossing the railroad tracks and witnessing a military truck backed up against the lakeshore. He described the area as where “land that just jets out there and it’s always been there and still is” (Pers Comm. Drye 2021). He witnessed the military team loading what he thought appeared to be one of the landing gears

from a wing of the aircraft and described a pier being located there though it had long been demolished. Mr. Drye believed that any recovery of the two servicemen's remains will prove difficult given the unfelled trees and silty conditions at the bottom of the lake.

Much of the information the interviewees provided in relation to the crash lines up with contemporary newspapers and official military reports. While it is possible the participants subconsciously absorbed the larger details from open-source materials, there are specifics to the crash that are only found in sources not readily available to the public at large without requests submitted to the National Archives or military base records. There are other details, however, that seem to take on a life of their own as a legend of the Badin Bomber has developed over the 80 years since it crashed into the lake.

Several statements by the residents seemed to agree with the official military report available in 1944 from Cherry Point and the EDU. In both Mrs. Roosevelt's statement with the *Stanly News and Press* in 1944 and Mr. Adkin's interview with the same paper in 2010 they stated they both felt the airplane was flying too low as it travelled northeast over the lake with the right-wing making contact with the water (*Stanly News and Press* 1944b). Mr. Adkin recalled just seeing "a huge cloud of smoke," following the aircraft contacting the water (Lisk 2010:2).

Both Mr. Hill and Mr. Dorsey related the oral history of an engine smoking and sputtering as the B-25 flew over the lake. The only confirmation that could be found was from a couple of newspaper articles and notes by Mr. Love. One from 1993 stated that "witnesses report they heard a sputtering sound as the airplane made its second round and there was a smell of fuel in the air" (Ferrara 1993:2). Another article from 2001 quoted Mary Elizabeth's sister Sarah Swan "recall hearing the airplane sputter as it dove toward Badin Lake" (Knox 2001:1A). In Mr. Love's notes he is very skeptical of the Navy's official report of the pilot "flat hatting" or as Mr.

Love put it “the Navy accusing McDaniel of showing off” (Love 1998). Mr. Love stated that in his research throughout the 1980s and 1990s, he had not been able to find one person that admitted to being an eyewitness to the crash. He further explained that he talked to several residents that heard the aircraft engine sputter and then begin to sound as if they were seizing up before the crash. Mr. Love was convinced that 2LT McDaniel’s unplanned stop at the army airfield in Charlotte was tied to a maintenance issue. Without being able to analyze the remains of the crash site there appears to be limited capabilities to determine if this is reasonable skepticism from the people of Badin or a mass dissociative amnesia given the prominent level of trauma the region experienced with the crash. No record of maintenance work has been located in what remains of the official military report. It is highly unusual given the catastrophic nature of the accident and the resource dedicated to search rescue and recovery operations that so many pages of the official accident report are missing.

CHAPTER FIVE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

During the fall of 2021, a team from ECU conducted research in the town of Badin and Palmerville related to the B-25 aircraft that crashed into Badin Lake. The research consisted of a pedestrian archaeological survey, oral history collection, and photogrammetry data collection. In addition, a subject matter expert on military aircraft recovery operations Air Force BG Boswell was consulted to review the official military investigation into the crash. The overarching goal was to obtain a clear picture of the events surrounding the crash through understanding the terrain, the town, people, and artifacts of Badin with an attempt to develop an accurate location for future investigation.

5.2 Pedestrian Archaeological Survey

The pedestrian archaeological surveys were conducted to clarify landscape details of the town of Badin, recreate the vantage points from which witnesses may have been positioned during the events of 8 June 1944, and uncover any additional artifacts or sites previously unrecorded. Fliers were created and disseminated by the ECU team prior to arriving to inform the community. The flier included information about the project and asked for information from the community about oral interviews and points of interest recommendations. The key areas investigated were the Badin Museum, lakeside positions, the Badin Inn, the Hardaway Site, the Palmerville cemetery, the pilot's widow's home, and the Narrows Dam.

The grounds of the town museum consisted of the main building, the firehouse, and a quadraplex. Constructed in 1916, the main museum building served as ALCOA's property and rental office. In 1920 it became the town kindergarten until a population decline required it to be repurposed again into a meeting hall. Located on the corner of Falls Road and Pine Street, in October 1998 the building was refurbished as the Badin Museum, following its move from its original site on the corner of Falls Road and Maple Street (Lovan 2022).

The main building covers the history of Badin beginning with the Native Americans that lived in the area. The Native American artifacts donated by residents of the area come from the surrounding countryside and the Hardaway Site. Exhibits in the main building also covers the industrial development of Badin up until the end of ALCOA's aluminum production in the region. This display provided the research team with a firmer understanding of the scale of industrial operations over a period of one hundred years near the lake.

The building referred to as the "firehouse" was a purpose-built construction following the expansion of the Badin Volunteer Fire Department's fleet. The fire department could no longer house its 1937 Ford American LaFrance Fire Engine and conferred with the Badin Museum to donate the truck to the organization. The Badin Museum Volunteers and Friends completed the construction of the firehouse in 2004, where following the emplacement of the firetruck further exhibits expanded around the "Old 37" artifact (Lovan 2022).

While the Old 37 is clearly the anchor of the firehouse building, the site also contains artifacts relevant to the investigation of the B-25 crash, the dam construction, and how the dam construction affected hydrography of the region. Critical to research tied to the B-25 were the artifacts believed to be associated with the crash. A nose wheel and a bulb, believed to be part of

the aircraft's radio system, were on display. Photos and biographies of the two pilots and relevant news articles to the crash were on display.

Also, of note is a century old map of the former Yadkin River (Figure 24) that the team identified as a target of opportunity to assist the Badin Museum in their historic preservation efforts and more fully develop a Community Archaeology approach. The museum has been keen to get professional preservation and curation advice for the map as it is deteriorating. As such, the project offered to assist them with support through the ECU special collections library staff who could assist with preservation and curation guidance.



Figure 24. French 1913 hand drawn map predicted expansion of Yadkin River (Photo from Joyner Library).

The team also toured the quadruplex adjacent to the firehouse. The quadruplex housing construction found throughout the town of Badin is a unique feature in NC, which was purpose

built for the employees of the aluminum works and the dam by the French owned Southern Aluminum. The company completed 57 quadrplexes beginning in 1913 until the end of 1914, when many of the laborers would return to France due to WWI (Lovan 2022). An additional feature of the homes unusual for such a rural region of NC was the presence of electricity and indoor plumbing. In 2004 the museum purchased the building (Figure 25), restoring its interior to resemble how it would appear in the 1910s.



Figure 25. 1913 French quadrplex restored by the Badin Museum (Photo courtesy of Badin Museum).

Located a short distance from the home and museum is the Badin Inn that was also constructed in 1913. The workers that initially moved into the region were residents of the inn, being invariably employed by Southern Aluminum and later ALCOA. Most of the Badin Inn has been restored, except for the third floor. While the third floor suffered fire damage at some point, much of it appears as it did in the early 20th century, including communal showers for lodgers

and blackout switches installed as safety features for the building in the event of an Axis raid during WWII.

The team then conducted a pedestrian survey of key areas of interest throughout the Badin area and the village Palmerville. Under the advisement of Badin local Mr. Dorsey, the team located the home where 2LT McDaniel's wife and family observed his flight. Near the church where 2LT McDaniel's headstone is located, the location gave an idea of the vantage point his family members would have had during the event. The team also approached the nearby Palmer Mountain as another vantage point but owing to its current use by the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (SWCS), they were unable to climb the summit for a better observation point.

The team then set out to the Hardaway Site located south-southeast of the suspected crash site of the B-25. The goal was to search the banks for the chains referenced in the 1944 recovery operation after action review (Hill and Kratochvil 1944). Coble advised of the possibility of finding the recovery chains as she observed them during her search operation in 1999 (Pers comm. Coble 2020). The Hardaway Site is known for containing some of the oldest Native American artifacts found within NC, some estimates placing the cultural material at 11,000 years old (Daniel 1998). The site was also the location of temporary housing for workers during the construction of the Narrows Dam, and there was debris indicating the presence of the former construction camp. Much of the debris scattered throughout the area of the former camp consisted of glass bottles, cutlery, and pot belly stove remnants.

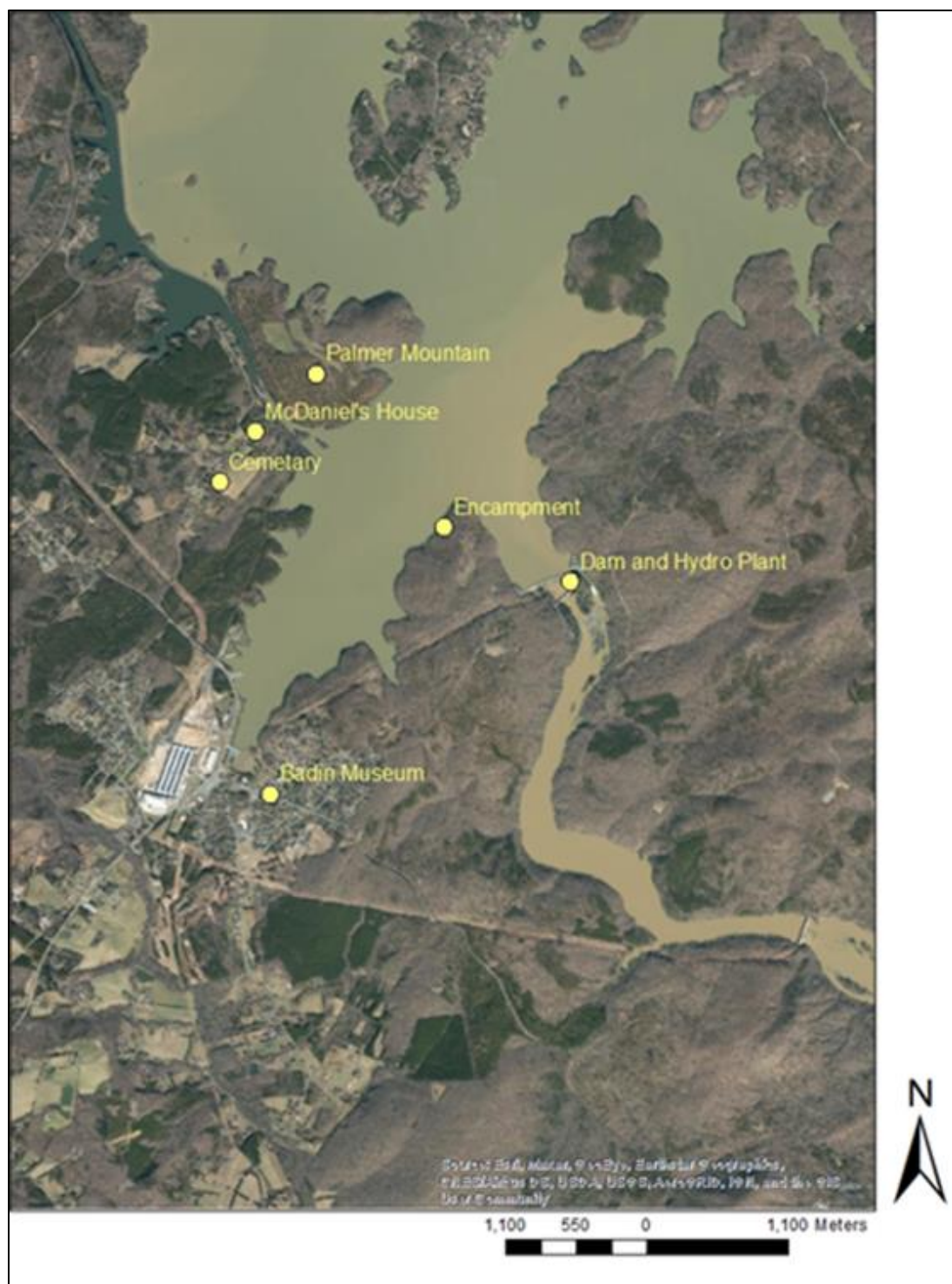


Figure 26. Map of Badin Lake marking significant locations of pedestrian survey (S. Sterling).

Unfortunately, the team was unable to locate evidence of the reported large recovery chains on either bank. The team checked the eastern side of the peninsula from land, and a later mission was conducted to observe the western side from the water. There exists considerable evidence of erosion on both banks of the peninsula, which led the research team to conclude that whatever was left of the grapnel chains was lost to the lake bottom.

One of the team's final destinations was the Narrows Dam and hydro station. Completed in 1917, the industry associated with the dam was the key employer for Badin for over a century, and of extreme strategic importance during WWII. At its completion it was the highest spillway dam in the world, and the largest dam in NC (Lovan 2021). Visiting the dam provided a clearer context for how Badin related to national security during WWII and how that may have informed the level of public revelation of the recovery operations of the B-25. It is a reasonable conclusion that the Navy and vicariously ALCOA, wanted to limit details released to the public to mitigate any interest from German would-be saboteurs.



Figure 27. Narrows Dam and hydro station (Photo by P. Smith).

Another data collection point involved conferring with retired Air Force BG Boswell. BG Boswell previously commanded two combat wings and served as the Deputy Commander of Joint Regional Command of the Pacific. He currently serves as a member of the executive board of directors for Task Force Dagger Foundation. BG Boswell assisted in previous joint missions with ECU, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), and Task Force Dagger Foundation in their efforts to recover missing servicemembers. With over 30 years of military experience, a level of over 4,800 hours of flight time in the B-1B, B-52H, RC-135, E-6B airframes, and a background in aircraft accident investigation and recovery, he was a logical choice in consultation regarding the crash of the Badin Bomber. Boswell was provided with the research findings and requested to provide his expert opinion on the cause and general disposition of the crash and prospects for remains recovery. His analysis from 2021 is provided in Appendix D.

BG Boswell characterized his analysis into two categories; the known or established fact, and drawing conclusions based on available data and forensics analysis from an aviation accident investigation methodology (Gentry Boswell Pers. Comm. 2021). Boswell assessed that 2LT McDaniel would be considered an inexperienced pilot with the 489.4 hours of career flight time logged. ENS Withrow's flight time on the aircraft trouble report are not reflected owing to the PBJ-1H having a single pilot cockpit with the co-pilot positioned behind the pilot as an augmentee for pilot duties (Gentry Boswell Pers. Comm. 2021). BG Boswell noted that the aircraft left Morris AAF on 8 June 1944 at 12:23 p.m. with a full load of fuel, feeling this was relevant as it likely impacted the handling characteristics of the B-25 in a low altitude and high-speed scenario. Much like Coble's 1999 research, BG Boswell noted that 2LT McDaniel

deviated from the most direct flight path to MCAS Cherry Point heading in a north-northeast direction towards Palmerville. BG Boswell believes that the aircraft was flying at a significantly low altitude and high-power setting given witness reports of windows and buildings seemed to shake as it flew by. Boswell additionally suggests that 2LT McDaniel used his hometown knowledge of the area, following NC State Hwy 740 as a visual reference point for his approach towards Badin Lake, then using the lake itself as a reference point. The similar sounds and vibrations reported by workers at the ALCOA plant as the aircraft passed through gives heavy implication that it was flying at roughly the same altitude and speed reported in Albemarle. BG Boswell assessed that 2LT McDaniel flew over the lake from a southwest direction, entering a left-hand turn towards the north facing side of Palmer Mountain, beginning his encircling of the town of Palmerville (Gentry Boswell Pers. Comm. 2021).

BG Boswell suspects that the aircraft was flying at an extremely low altitude, below 240 ft., while circuiting the town. This is supported by multiple eyewitness accounts and the fact that the family could not see the aircraft flying over the lake due to viewpoint obstruction by Palmer Mountain/Island. Palmer Mountain is 673 ft. high, which is only slightly taller than Badin Lake's surface at 505 ft. BG Boswell believes if the B-25 was flying slightly higher at 250 ft., it would have been clearly visible to the family during the entirety of its turning route (Gentry Boswell Pers. Comm. 2021). The aircraft crashed during its third circuit in which its inboard wing contacted the water surface during a banking turn.

BG Boswell's expert opinion based on the preponderance of evidence concluded the following. The aircraft was flying lower than 250 ft. above ground level (AGL) for the final planned pass over his family. The speed of the aircraft at that altitude would have to be at least 250 mph and achieve a bank of 35 to 45 degrees to be able to fly between the two points at that

speed. From the collection of eyewitness accounts and the wreckage reported as recovered, there is strong indication that the B-25 began to cartwheel into the lake after the inboard wing made impact with the lake surface. BG Boswell stated that the key indicator was the engine sputter mentioned by eyewitness (Coble 2004:4). The noise occurred shortly before the explosion from the crash impact, BG Boswell believes this would have been caused by the knifing impact of the inboard engine into the water prior to the main impact of the aircraft. BG Boswell concluded that portions of the engines on the inner third of the wings would have separated from the fuselage during the initial impact. The tail would have separated from the aft bulkhead during the impact and likely contained an air pocket. This interpretation explains some of the confusion among eyewitnesses stating that the aircraft appears to have sunk after ten minutes afloat. What they were witnessing was the tail section of the B-25 that maintained buoyancy while the rest of the wreckage sank to the lakebed and submerged trees. BG Boswell assessed that the crash could be characterized as a high-speed, low angle crash with the impact angle at an estimated 25 degrees below level flight (Gentry Boswell Pers. Comm. 2021).

The suspected aircraft crash geometry predicted by BG Boswell, in tandem with the EDU salvage report, provide a convincing conclusion that the bodies of both 2LT McDaniel and ENS Withrow were thrown from the cockpit during the crash. BG Boswell noted that the cockpit design of the PBJ-1 varied significantly from the parent Model B-25. McDaniel's airframe only had a single set of controls and the pilots chair oriented to the left side of the cockpit, while the co-pilot sat behind the pilot with no primary or secondary aircraft controls (Gentry Boswell Pers. Comm. 2021). The pilot seat in the Badin Bomber was a double bucket metal seat that included a 4-point restraint harness comprised of shoulder restraints and lap belt contained within an inertial reel (Figure 28).

Pilots' Seats

B-25J Pilot's Seat



Wooden Seat



Co-Pilot/Cannoneer Metal Seat

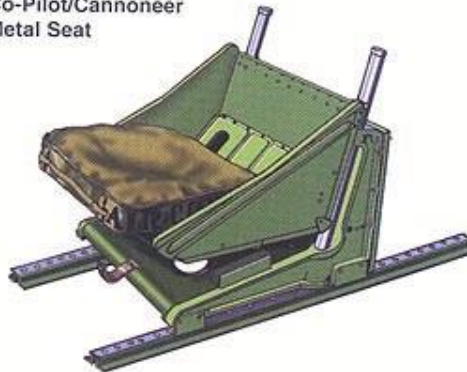


Figure 28. Illustration of B-25J variant pilot and co-pilot seats (Drendel 1997:64).

In aircraft crashes it is common for the pilot's body to remain strapped in the seat with the inertial mass of both the seat and pilot ejecting from the aircraft. BG Boswell believes that the nose section of the aircraft ruptured during the violent cartwheel, tossing both pilots out of the mangled aircraft. 2LT McDaniel would have suffered severe damage to his extremities during the incident, and Boswell believes this could account for the report of flesh found near the crash scene on a piece of board (Boone 1944:3). ENS Withrow seated in the copilot half bucket chair behind 2LT McDaniel, would have had the same restraint system as 2LT McDaniel. BG Boswell contends that ENS Withrow would have passed through the forward bulkhead and separated from the aircraft in the same manner as 2LT McDaniel (Gentry Boswell Pers. Comm. 2021). He would have suffered the same catastrophic damage to his body as McDaniel. This may also account for the witness statement from Wade Atkins during his attempt to rescue the pilots by swimming to the point of impact immediately after the crash. He reported seeing what

appeared to be a human head bobbing in the water (Lisk 2010:2). The trajectory of the pilots while still strapped to their seats may have resulted in decapitation as the chairs forced their bodies through the nose, striking their extremities on the bullet-proof glass.

BG Boswell completed his report by considering the feasibility of recovery of the pilots. Using his experiential background in aircraft crash investigations he believes that the pilots and chairs were thrown within 164 ft of the initial location of the fuselage. The water temperatures at Badin Lake's bottom would significantly slow the decomposition process, temperatures BG Boswell estimated would be 40 degrees Fahrenheit or lower at the crash site. He also believes that the catastrophic damage sustained to both pilots' bodies prevented the development of decomposition gases providing buoyancy to the remains, and the four-point harnesses would have contained the bodies post impact, with portions of the torso and pelvic girdle likely intact in the servicemen's pilot seats (Gentry Boswell Pers. Comm. 2021).

Coble's (2004) research arrived at two conclusions for 2LT McDaniel and ENS Withrow's remains. That being the pilots are still entangled in the submerged forest still strapped in their seats, or they sunk into the mud of the lakebed under the weight of said seats (Coble 2004:29). BG Boswell does share Coble's suspicion that they could be entangled in the trees but does not believe they could have sunk into the lakebed, his opinion being that it is extremely solid and relatively stable (Gentry Boswell Pers. Comm. 2021). Without a geological consultation, it is unlikely to determine whether there is sedimentation and burial.

Coble's research established the potential location of the fuselage (Figure 24), tail sections (Figure 25), and engines (Figure 26) of the aircraft, although it has yet to be confirmed through visual survey. BG Boswell believes ROV dive equipment could reestablish the debris field giving a general direction of travel of the crash. He also believes that the initial

magnetometer survey group of five anomalies at the wreckage site may contain the pilot and copilot seats with human remains on them. He believes that additional groupings would include some of the .50 caliber machine guns from the nose mount. Coble's survey provided enough data to construct a general submerged aircraft site formation. BG Bowell believes that a secondary survey with a correlated magnetometer and side scan sonar would have a high level of success to locate and further define the crash site and human remains (Gentry Boswell Pers. Comm. 2021).

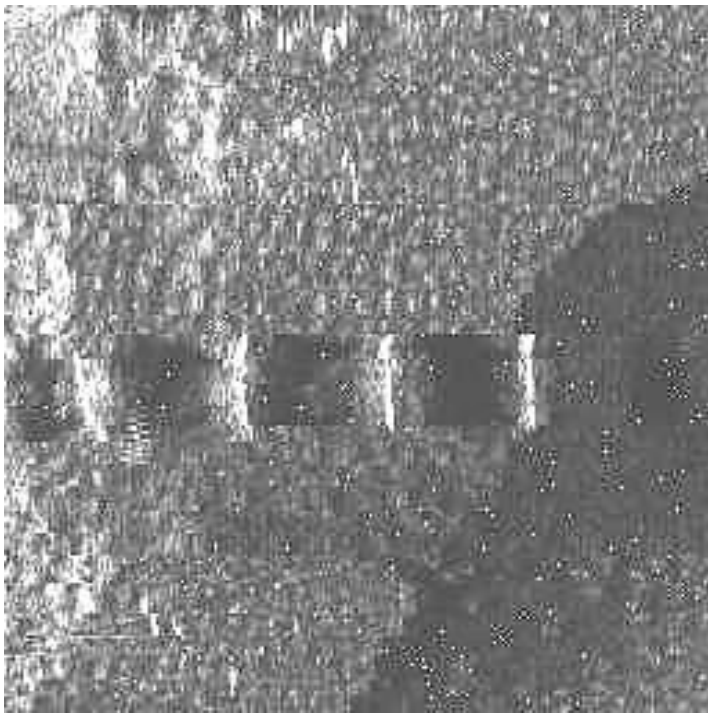


Figure 29. Sonar image of anomaly 1 suspect fuselage of B-25 (Coble 2004).



Figure 30. Sonar image of anomaly 2 suspected tail section of B-25 (Coble 1999).

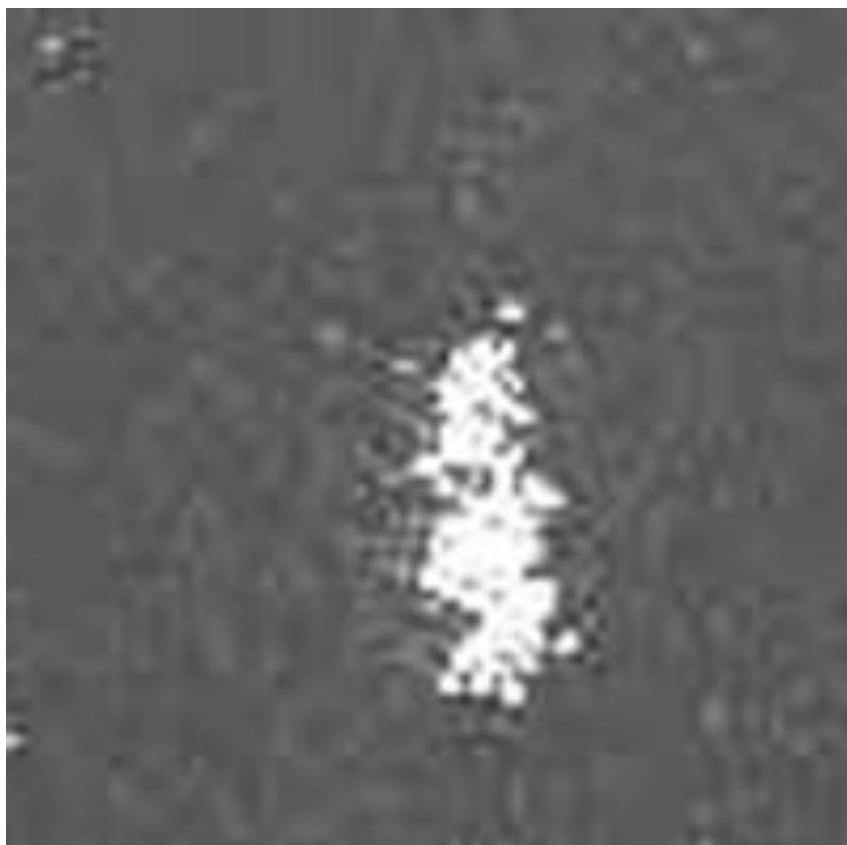


Figure 31. Sonar image of anomaly 3 suspected engine of B-25 (Coble 1999).



Figure 32. Sonar image of anomaly 4, unknown debris near dam (Coble 1999).



Figure 33. Sonar image of anomaly 5, unknown debris near anomaly 1 (Coble 1999).

5.3 Photogrammetry

The records of the military aircraft investigation and recovery in 1944 and witness statements strongly corroborate there was salvage of the aircraft conducted in the aftermath of the accident. What is not known is exactly what and how much of the plane was salvaged.

Parts of the airplane were also salvaged by locals living near Badin Lake. Two artifacts tied to the aircraft have found their way to the Badin Museum since Coble worked there in 1999 and 2004. The first was what appeared to be the nose wheel of the landing gear that washed ashore following the crash and is referenced in the 2021 interview with Mr. Dorsey (Figure 34 and 36). The curators of the museum believed the second artifact to be a radio tube that survived the crash (Figure 35).



Figure 34. Nosewheel starboard side from B-25 Landing Gear (Photo by P.Smith).



Figure 35. Suspected radio tube from B-25 aircraft (Photo by P. Smith).

The team took multiple photographs of these two artifacts to create photogrammetry models. The photogrammetry models aided in clarifying the provenience of the artifacts and matching them to known items on B-25J airframe schematics.

The nosewheel of the landing gear appears to be a Robart 8-spoke wheel with several key markings that tie it to the aircraft. The most prominent marking confirming provenience of the wheel was a U.S Navy anchor engraving on the wheel hub itself. Additionally, the fastening points for B-25's nose landing gear strut are visible (Figure 34). Tread on the tire rubber shows diamond markings which were more commonplace in 1944, early war B-25 tread was smooth (Drendel 1997:33). The tire was produced by the General Tire and Rubber Company based on the markings found on the rubber sidewall. There are additional identification numbers, but they could not be correlated with databases. Comparison to archival photos and the 30 in. circumference of the nose wheel strongly supports an association with PBJ-H-89050.

The suspected radio tube on display much like the nosewheel is in surprisingly good condition. It has a serial number located on its connection point that had been added by museum staff for accountability. The staff believes it to be a vacuum tube component from the B-25. The markings recorded by hand and from photogrammetry show a glass etching of "6F6G" on the bulb, with a "PHILCO $\frac{6}{u}$ " marking around the base of the tube. The etching of 6F6G was the model number for the tube, with the G denoting it is a shouldered glass envelop model. These were made as replacements to the 6F6 vacuum tube, which used a metal envelope that was prone to overheating. Precursory searches confirmed that the artifact was a vacuum tube found in electronic devices during the WWII era. A U.S. Army Air Forces manual dated 1 May 1945, lists various aircraft electronics that used the 6F6 vacuum tubes. One component listing shows the

tube as part of the AN/ARN-7 variant of the radio compass system (Army Technical Service Command 1945:164). The AN/ARN-7 sat on the port side of the B-25J in the nose section. The pristine condition of the tube could be explained by the component being protected by external communication components protecting the tube as it was thrown from the airplane during the violent cartwheeling portion of the crash. The radio tube model was difficult to photograph due to the translucent glass and proved to be even more difficult to model unfortunately.



Figure 36. Photogrammetric model of nosewheel at Badin Museum (model by S. Sterling).

A photogrammetric model of a monument of the crash was also produced. The memorial stone is located 50 ft. northeast of the Badin Museum's main building entrance. It appears to orientate the observer towards the general direction of the crash as they read the inscription, whether this was an intentional design choice or coincidence is uncertain. The monument is

made of granite and an inscription contains a sketch of a PBJ-1 model B-25 and recounts the story of the Badin Bomber's final flight. The left-over funds from Coble's research were used to pay for the monument. The stone memorial was dedicated on Veteran's Day, 11 November 2001 (Coble 2004:30).



Figure 37. Monument to crash (Photograph by S. Sterling).

One final model was made of the empty gravesite of 2LT Charles M. McDaniel. The grave is located close to where 2LT McDaniel lost his life. His widow Mary Elizabeth is buried next to him. The inscription reflects his birth and death date along with U.S. Navy aviator wings,

and his military rank with service branch. The gravesite is technically considered a cenotaph containing the inscription should his remains ever be recovered.



Figure 38. Photogrammetric model of grave site of 2LT Charles M. McDaniel (model by J. Schuler).

The general area of Badin and the former village of Palmerville provide a quantity of archaeological evidence to assist in developing a coherent historical narrative of the Badin Bomber. In tandem with military records, it was possible to reference the positions various witnesses to the crash were likely positioned within the two regions. This was helpful in BG Boswell's estimation of what altitude and what speed the aircraft was possibly flying and making a reasonable determination of what may have caused the accident. The data captured by Coble's teams and the EDU can further support the cause based on the condition of the wreck. The evidence the ECU team recorded in the Badin Museum compliment BG Boswell's findings and supports the conclusion of high speed into the lake surface. The relevance of the cenotaph and the displays in the museum demonstrate the town's identity as stewards of both pilots' memories and the hope that they can one day be recovered.

CHAPTER SIX: RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapters this thesis told the story of the Badin Bomber and how the tragic events surrounding the aircraft fit into the backdrop of WWII and NC's long relationship with the U.S. military. It accomplished this using original primary historic documents, military correspondence, contemporary news sources, secondary sources, oral histories and archaeological surveys under the guidance of Community Archaeology approaches and works related to the psychology of trauma. The goal of this chapter is to review the results, consider the research questions, and provide guidance for future researchers.

6.2 Results

There was a surprising amount of primary source material in both the National Archives, Stanley County archives, the Badin Museum, and the MCAS Cherry Point Historian's Office. The correspondence between the Navy dive team and the Navy and Marine Corps headquarters painted a clear picture regarding efforts of the EDU. There appeared to be a common perception from the people of Badin that the Navy appeared to be less than forthcoming about their efforts based on contemporary newspapers, Coble's (1999, 2004) research, and the oral histories. The telegrams between the EDU, Washington D.C., and Cherry Point demonstrate that the U.S. Army, Navy, and Marine Corps exhausted every effort to recover both men in a time when both modern diving technology and dive theory were at the very beginning their infancy. The team

must have been under immense pressure with both the parents and spouse of 2LT McDaniel observing their efforts and the added emotional toll of trying to recover their brothers-in-arms in what the EDU likely assessed as a hopeless cause after their first dive. Despite that they continued diving, until sustaining a diver casualty, which appeared to be a determining factor in why the EDU suspended their recovery effort (Coble 2004:6). Stories may continue to perpetuate of the Navy secretly recovering classified equipment, but the primary sources related to official military reports and correspondence simply do not support that, nor does it adhere to the “Warriors Ethos” that military servicemembers take deadly serious, the belief that no man or woman is left behind.

Coble’s field research in the late 1990s proved to be invaluable as a support document for the Badin Bomber research. It provided large amounts of background data on the course of events related to the crash and served as a guide on how to find further primary resources. Coble’s work is solely responsible for the preservation of important documents related to the crash. Specifically, the copies she made of original telegraph communications between the U.S. Army, Navy and Marine Corps held by the National Archives are now the only legible copies believed to currently exist. The original copies contained within the National Archives are in such a poor state due to degradation that only the first page of the three is legible. Coble’s work also functioned as a social weathervane for the people of Badin. Her efforts in collaborating with the community demonstrated without a doubt that the people of Badin volunteer enthusiastically to function as the caretakers of the Badin Bomber’s memory.

Based on her research, Coble’s believes that no determination can be made on the cause of the crash if it was maintenance related, owing to the poor condition of the wreck site (Coble 2004:29). However, based on the review of eyewitness accounts, military training records, and

the expert aircraft accident analysis of BG Boswell, this thesis asserts that 2LT McDaniel likely pushed the aircraft too hard resulting in a stall that proved fatal for the two pilots. While the research of this thesis would have preferred to fully exonerate 2LT McDaniel, the available evidence leads to the conclusion that the same daring that led 2LT McDaniel into flying Navy combat aircraft, may have contributed to overconfidence of the B-25 aircraft.

One of the more surprising findings was the various personal notes by Mr. Bill Love found in the Stanly County archives. Copies were also found within the Badin Museum records. Mr. Love was clearly dedicated to both preserving the memory of the pilots and eventually recovering their remains for burial. Multiple newspaper clippings in the Stanly County Archives show Mr. Love taking the time to educate both students and adults on the B-25 airframe and the story of the Baden Bomber. Copies of his correspondence in which he petitioned the U.S. Navy to reopen their investigation were also recorded as well as a letter of gratitude from the EDU to Mr. Love in 1993. The B-25's radio tube was given to the Badin Museum by Mr. Love. Finally, given that the notecard containing possible wreck location coordinates, it is very likely either Mr. Love wrote this down himself, or was personally provided it from the EDU team members as it was cataloged with his many letters and notes.

6.3 Research Questions

What is the history of the B-25 crash site?

A key intention of this thesis was to produce an academic resource that accurately recounted the narrative surrounding the B-25 crash site known as the Badin Bomber. The foundation of this narrative lay in the analysis of both official U.S. military documents and contemporary media during and after the crash incident. Despite the U.S. military being wedged

between two of the largest amphibious invasions when the crash occurred, no equipment or human power was spared in the effort to recover the two aviators. Three attempts have been made to recover 2LT McDaniel and ENS Withrow: the original U.S. Navy operation in June/July of 1944, a U.S. Navy attempt in 1993, and Coble's attempt in 1999. None of them met with success, owing to various setbacks in each that could be attributed to "Murphy's Law." One commonality among the three operations is the reality of the extreme conditions of Badin Lake including highly turbid water, a depth of nearly 200 ft., and a submerged hardwood forest.

What remains of the B-25 crash site?

One aspect of the thesis was the attempt to piece together what data was available from the operations conducted in 1944, 1993, and 1999 that specifically described the crash site or the conditions of material that originated from the aircraft. The three reports available are generally consistent that the fuselage was badly crushed, except for one varying report. COL Conratt's 15 July 1944 letter described the aircraft as having disintegrated on impact with the parts strewn through the crash site (Conratt 1944). The evidence collected in this thesis demonstrates a middle ground in which the aircraft cartwheeled into the lake, crushing portions of the fuselage while scattering aircraft debris between the point of impact and the current resting place. The anomalies located by EDU's team in 1993 and Coble's team in 1999 appear consistent with the shape of a B-25 tail and fuselage. The crash site has been undisturbed since the cessation of attempted recovery operations in 1944.

What can oral histories contribute to our knowledge about the B-25 crash site?

The oral histories of the people that live in Badin, NC region provide an important paradigm not readily available in the official military reports. The precise location of the aircraft wreckage is missing from the U.S. Navy's records related to the original crash investigation, with relevant details such as how fast the aircraft was travelling, and altitude position relegated to the eyewitnesses of the crash or those that perpetrate the oral history. Many of the people that personally witnessed the incident are long since deceased, but their experience remains through oral histories passed down to their relatives, neighbors, and interviews conducted by various NC news sources over the years.

While witness accounts should be treated with some level of healthy skepticism, there are enough consistencies between various Badin oral history sources to determine that the B-25 was both flying at a high rate of speed and low altitude to rattle windows and alarm residents in the region. The aircraft was additionally flying low enough that witnesses could hear the engine sputtering just before the crash which is consistent with BG Boswell's assessment that the aircraft stalled due to a flat hatting incident. As a further confidence builder towards the veracity of the oral histories, newspaper reports following the initial crash in 1944 mention that part of the landing gear washed ashore. Nearly 60 years later the nose wheel of the aircraft was relocated, having been repurposed by a Badin farmer living next to the lake.

The Badin oral history also serves as an important tool in triangulation. Many of those that witnessed the crash could be placed at a specific point in either Palmerville or Badin. Being able to place the witnesses in relation to how they observed the aircraft approach and tragic accident is an invaluable asset in creating prediction models for the location of the crash site. In another context, the oral histories give insight into the emotional relationship the people of Badin

have with the crash and the two pilots. There is a definite air within the town that they are the caretakers in perpetuity of the lost servicemen.

What memorialization and commemoration exists today for the B-25 crash site?

Specifically tied to Coble's efforts to find and recover 2LT McDaniel and ENS Withrow, some memorialization and commemoration for the two servicemen were realized. First, a painting created by Badin resident Roger Thomas depicting the B-25's final flight over the lake accomplished a quantifiable product for memorializing both men and served as a method for helping fund a renewed search. Second, a space was created within the Badin Museum that tells the stories of both the men and the ill-fated mission.

Coble's unused operational funds combined with the capital raised through the sale of Thomas's prints depicting the Badin Bomber were used to commission a memorial stone within the footprint of the Badin Museum. 2LT McDaniel's surviving sister Rebecca Sykes (McDaniel), and ENS Withrow's brother Ray Withrow were able to attend the dedication of the memorial stone held on November 11th of 2001 (Figure 39 and 40). Ray Withrow, himself a WWII veteran was quoted at the time as saying, "it was the first service I was able to attend for my brother" (Knox 2001:3A). ENS Withrow's brother passed away, almost three years to the day of the memorial stone dedication. Memorial services for the two men are held yearly during Veterans Day. Finally, a short journey northwest of Badin's main street, tucked away in a quiet church cemetery in the mostly forgotten village of Palmerville is the grave of Mary Elizabeth Hill. Immediately adjacent to her is the cenotaph of her first husband, 2LT Charles M. McDaniel, both their stones facing towards the shores of Badin Lake.

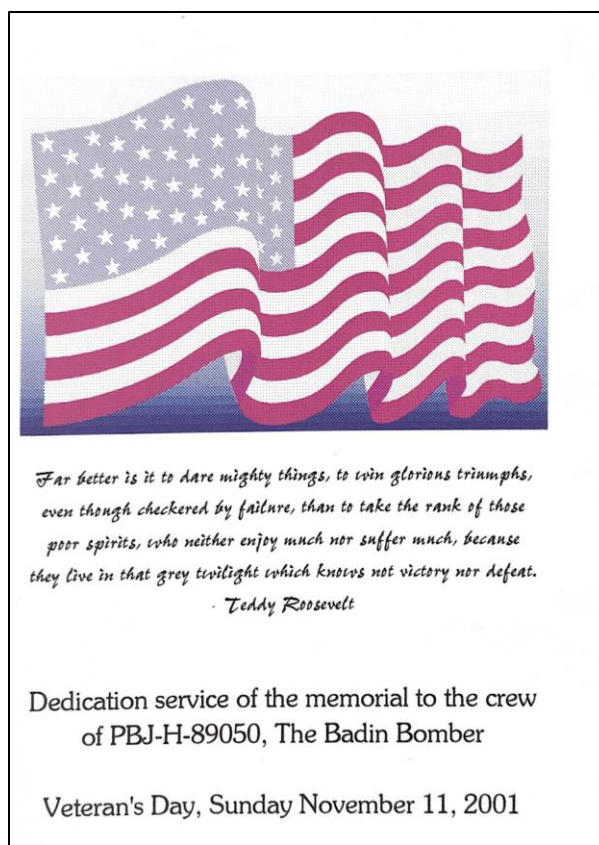


Figure 39. Front Cover of 2001 Badin Bomber Memorial Dedication pamphlet (Courtesy of Badin Museum).

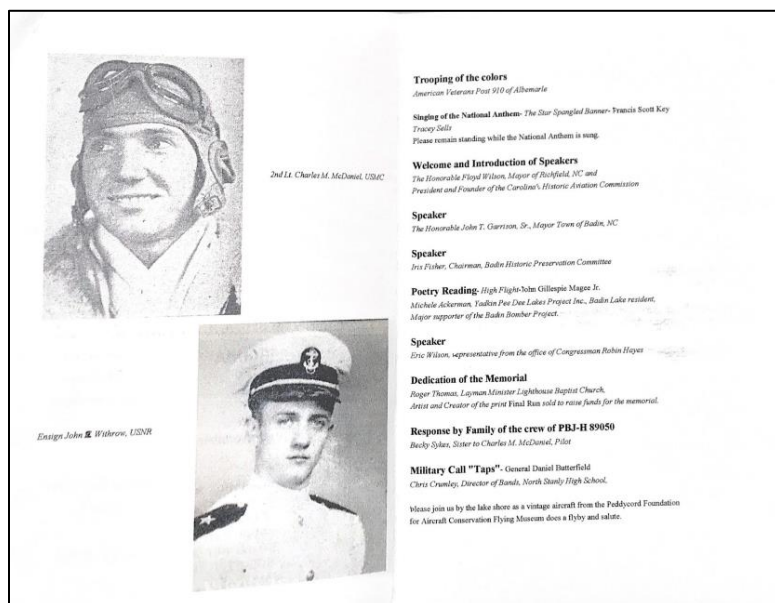


Figure 40. Agenda page of 2001 Badin Bomber Memorial Dedication pamphlet (Courtesy of Badin Museum).

6.4 Future Directions

There are several opportunities for further research to gain a better understanding of the Badin Bomer and its relationship to the region. One of the key pursuits of future research would be consultation with the African American community in the region. Multiple attempts were made to find crash witnesses or their descendants within the African American community of East Badin. In previous research this potential resource of oral history had been overlooked. This was unfortunate given the passage of time resulted in the loss of many eyewitnesses, and the loss of the ALCOA plant in the 2000s may have resulted in the exodus of the bridge generation that could have continued to tell the tradition of how the B-25 crashed into the lake.

The Stanly County History Center and the Badin Museum both contain records related to the ALCOA aluminum plant and Narrows Dam in Badin, NC. During research in both locations, the files appeared to be related to internal logistics and general stewardship of the industry. ALCOA maintained a private security force during WWII, and it is likely one of the requirements of their force was to maintain a duty log. While no records could be found during investigation, it remains feasible that ALCOA may have duty logs from 8 June 1944 contained in either locations archives or a third archive not supplied to historians that contains industrial secrets.

Another course of action for future researchers is a survey of the various derelict buildings in the area with the assistance and advisement of Badin residents. Both the nose wheel of the aircraft as well as the century old survey map of the river were found in old barns (Pers. Comm. Curt Dorsey 2022). There were also various rumors in Badin of residents having items

tied to the crash in storage within attics. Curt Dorsey recalls a bench in one of his relative's homes that was believed to be from the crash (Pers. Comm. Curt Dorsey 2022). A town hall meeting with archaeologists may bear fruit, and keep in the self-sufficient tradition of Badin – a tradition that saw its own citizens take initiative to create a museum telling the story of region.

While the Badin Museum has a lot of information to convey about 2LT McDaniel it does not have much on ENS Withrow. This is likely due to the familial ties McDaniel had to the region and the artifacts related to him being readily available. Aside from having dinner with McDaniel's family the night before the crash, Withrow's ties were in PA. Military archives had limited information on ENS Withrow and his biography had to be stitched together from available archival newspapers and a veterans insurance claim by his parents. A suggested course of action is reaching out to surviving family members descended from Raymond P. Withrow, ENS Withrow's older brother.

An additional recommendation is to pursue displaying WWII style U.S. Navy and Marine Corps uniforms in the Badin Museum just as the two aviators would have worn them in 1944. Companies that produce uniforms for the U.S. military may be willing to donate these items when given the context of the uniform display. This uniform display could serve a dual purpose of commemorating both men and providing education to museum visitors about both aviators' military service.

Additional remote sensing missions should be conducted at the site. Since Coble's operation in 1999 and the EDU team's search missions in 2000, remote sensing technology and capabilities have vastly improved. Owing to damaged equipment and less than optimal conditions in the previous operations, neither mission was able to get clean imaging that can conclusively demonstrate that the anomalies in Coble's report is evidence from the Badin

Bomber (Coble 2004:48). In support of Coble's recommendations, utilizing a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) may prove to be the best course of action to confirm the wreckage. The blackout conditions, unfelled trees, water temperatures, and depth are all risks on their own, but in combination pose extreme danger to maritime archaeologists attempting dives to confirm aircraft materials.

There is, however, a case to be made that attempts to recover the servicemen should be made, much like remote sensing dive technology has vastly improved since the original mission in 1944. Additionally, diving technology such as Darkwater Vision has allowed what was formerly blackout conditions for scuba divers to become somewhat visible dependent on material in the water column. Evidence in both Coble (1999, 2004) and BG Boswell (2021) reports suggest that the remains of both pilots are likely still with their seats. Given the conditions in the lake it is highly possible that their remains are in a recoverable condition (Boswell 2021). However, the significant dangers of the operation require new remote sensing missions of the crash site to be conducted first to mitigate the risk for divers as much as possible.

6.5 Conclusion

The events during and after the B-25's crash into Badin Lake present an opportunity for observing a how a community deals with and memorializes a tragedy. The efforts of the Badin citizens to preserve both the story of Badin and the memory of the two lost aviators occurred without initial academic involvement. It was the efforts of residents such as Rebecca McDaniel Sykes, Bill Love, David Summerlin and many others that ensured the story of Badin Bomber continued to be told.

It is ultimately the prerogative of the U.S. Navy and DPAA on whether the two servicemen should be recovered. The people of Badin seem split on the issue, with some seeing the lake as their grave, while others feel the two men will not be at peace until they are placed on hallowed ground. Technology and standard operating procedures have advanced enough that the prospect of recovering the two servicemen's remains is achievable. Whether or not it should be conducted could be informed by the opinion of Rebecca McDaniel Sykes, 2LT McDaniel's younger sister. In 1999 she told Coble, "I don't want to see anyone else get hurt or possibly die because of such a search" (Coble 2004:6). Rebecca was supportive of their recovery so long as the safety of recovery specialists was never in question.

The story of the Badin Bomber is one of extreme tragedy and perseverance. It is equally a story about a small town in the Uwharrie Mountains of NC and the people that have called it home for generations. For both good and ill, the events of 8 June 1944 shaped present day Badin. The trauma of the accident still echoes just below the surface of this former WWII boomtown, just as the Yadkin River still weaves its powerful current just under the surface of Badin Lake.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Interview Release Form: Oral Histories on the Badin Bomber

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Interviewer Name: _____

By signing the form below, I give permission for any audio recordings, video recordings, and/or photographs made during this project to be utilized by researchers and the public for educational purposes including publications, exhibitions, World Wide Web (Arc GIS Story Map), and presentations.

I agree to the uses of these materials described above, except for any restrictions, noted below:

Name (print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Interviewer Name (print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDANCE.

1. Personal Information

- a. Name.
- b. Age.
- c. Race/ethnicity.
- d. Length of time living in the Badin Lake Region.
- e. Familial history with Badin Lake/Uwharrie region.

2. Overview of the Crash of PBJ-89050 (Badin Bomber).

- a. What do you know of the events leading to the crash of the B-25 into the lake?
- b. What was first seen/heard that made you or relatives/neighbors realize the crash occurred?
- c. What was the initial response of people living in your area to the crash?
- d. How did the Navy become aware of the crash?
- e. What theories do you know of where the plane may have crashed?

3. U.S. Navy response to the crash.

- a. What was the Navy's response to the crash?
- b. Did the Navy keep locals informed of the progress of the search/recovery mission?
- c. How involved was the ALCOA company with recovery operations?

4. Stories of B-25 parts salvaged from the lake

- a. Any stories of neighbors or family members finding parts washed ashore?
- b. Were parts salvaged before or after it was determined the pilots were killed on impact?
- c. How many people do you think repurposed wreckage items for use as tractor spare tires or other equipment?

- d. Is there a chance any parts related to the wreck are sitting in forgotten sheds/farmhouses? And do you know of any?

5. Hypothetical future operations

- a. Do you have feelings on future operations by professionals/scientists to positively locate the servicemembers and wreck?

- b. Any ideas on potential future risks to the resting place/wreck site?

6. Memorialization of the crew members.

- a. What are your feelings on the current museum exhibits and memorial stone?
- b. Any concerns for the future preservation of the site, missing service members?
- c. What would you like to see done in the future for a possible memorial/exhibit for 2LT McDaniel and Ens. Winslow?

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEWS

1 Tony Hill Interview

14 September 2021

Tony Hill: They are when he was, I was not born when, but I know how much I've studied. I wish if anything, if my dad was here, he could tell you a whole lot more about it. He was real young at that about right there.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Hopefully we can do that. And then I'm also going to do a double take because sometimes these.

Tony Hill: Yea. I've got one of those, they don't...

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, exactly. So I'll hit record on that.

Tony Hill: Mine was used for different things. Mine was used in the military.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, I bet it was. So really, basically we sort of start off with an introduction of your name. You know, who you are. And why we've may have reached out to you.

Tony Hill: Okay. I've never done stuff like this before you know, I'm usually bashful, not just bashful, I like to keep things to myself.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Okay. Well, so this is mostly just used for academic research and education and museum outreach. And so part of this project is collecting oral histories from the local community before you know, it, it, it moves on, like you said, um, it's important to get these, you know, sort of in the record. And, um, so much has already been lost about the story.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: A lot of that people don't care anymore.

Tony Hill: They're destroying it.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: It's true.

Tony Hill: In our country. Now they're trying to get rid of a lot of history. It makes me plumbs. I don't even know.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: If I get on Facebook is to say happy birthday and get off.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yea I use it for work and get off.

Tony Hill: That's it. I don't, I don't, I'm tired of hearing all the political stuff and the history of destruction. I'm a history buff. And when you mess with it, you really you're tearing me up inside. That's what built this country was history.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Well, I agree. And I think, you know, these, these kinds of things are like the important things that we need. We need to collect and record and keep, you know, it's not just the event itself, but people's remembering the event and lots of, part of your family history.

Tony Hill: My family, my family was here before this, this town was even built.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. Tell us a little bit about that.

Tony Hill: Well, first of all, my name's Tony Hill, I'm one of the Heel's from Palmerville.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Heel's, from Palmerville

Tony Hill: And, uh, the Deberrys, the Kirks and, uh, Coggins. Uh, they were there. They came right along, uh, I'm about, pretty much about Kin to them too. Cause most of them married within, married each other and the McDaniels, you know, they came around later. Uh, Palmerville was first, Palmerville was a town. Uh, it was bigger than Baden. It had, uh, a plank boards. Uh, I'll try and get my cousin. Maybe we can follow up another time. They got pictures

of the old plank walk boards. The only two buildings still left. There is a general store. It is still there.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Oh wow.

Tony Hill: And the church, the church is the oldest. Some of the homes are the oldest because of the Daniel, Daniel Curt, the Curt home, uh, the Coggins home. There's several homes there that still, uh, They were built later on, but they were built for that community. What they were doing was building the dams. They started out, oh, Whitney, you can get into that later on how they started the dams and stuff.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: But my family along with other families was building dams and then the plant came along. The French came in and they wanted to build the plant. Well, my family was involved in that too. Uh, I won't get into my family's history. We were, I... it's so big. My mom's full-blooded Cherokee, my dad's Norwegian and Scandinavian. So, we got a mix.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: [Overlap] That's a mix.

Tony Hill: Now you see why I'm so rough and tough, I guess. [laughing] Uh, but they came down, grandpa owned a lot of the land in Palm...um, Montgomery county and Palmerville, but anyway, When the plant started getting built, that's when the family started coming in and Palmerville wan't big enough because it was a dead end in the first place, but they needed a open area to, to start the town and Badin, that's when the Badin history, like my apartment was built in 1915. And I don't know that for a fact, they, somebody said it wan't, but how come they got 1915 engraved in the concrete or the mortar in my chimney? So, I'm thinking it had to have been built in 1915...

Deborah: It refers as to when they got started and then who finished what. Cause mine's 1916, but mine's finished by Alcoa. These, we believe were finished by the French.

Tony Hill: Yeah. Cause see, mine says 1915 on the mortar. They had actually hand scraped it in there. And some of the brick you can tell that hand dug in there, you know, it's not just in, but anyway, uh, my family came into Palmerville, uh, 11 of them... born. Uh, one of them was my aunt, uh, Elizabeth Heel. Uh, that's the one that married Charles. They wan't married for, you know, a couple of weeks, but he was, he had made the plans to come and see his bride, uh, to do that, he had to stop off, I think is in Charlotte to take the cherry point, these bombers. And, uh, he was the pilot. Then they had a copilot and, uh, uncle Charles was a Marine pilot, but, uh, he would come to see her and when he was going to leave, he's going to tell her I'm going to fly around three times and wave goodbye and ask to tip of the wings. Well, not knowingly that this plane is not made to do that. It is made to do that in low altitudes, but he didn't know that they were having malfunction problems with these times. Um, a lady named Ms. Roosevelt was out fishing on the point exactly to her in front of her is where the plane crash. Said that the one of the engines was smokin' and stallin' and says it, it was skippin'. And that was the bottom engine as it was turning to its left. And she says it hit the water so fast. It was like a bullet. I mean, it just flipped and went into the water and it was gone. I mean, it was like, it just drove down into the water.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Okay so, uh, nose, dive it, just nosedive? Like it nose-dived into the water. [overlap]

Tony Hill: [Overlap] Right. I mean, just, just bombed. They just like, it flipped right into the water and went straight down and she says, it's sunk so fast. And then parts were floating. I mean, stuff came up, uh, tires, buoys, different parts of the plane would come up and people

would collect them. Bill Ward was one of them I think, had collected a tire or something. And Curt, I think Curt Dorsey had gotten a hold of it. I don't know the story behind all that, but...

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Sure.

Tony Hill: I never really cared about studying that part. My study was to find out, yes, he was my uncle. I don't know nothing about his mom and dad. I don't know nothing about him. I don't know his attitude.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: My thing is I know he was my uncle. Why did he crash the plane? Why did the plane crash? That was my theory behind the door, was part of it. Why... what happened? Nobody's explaining why it happened. Of course, anybody could fall over dead, but why?

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Right.

Tony Hill: So years down the road, I started collecting things. His and my aunts. I've got oil paintings and stuff. And I decided, well, you know, I read that article in our state. Uh, I said, you know, there's more to it than once she sayin'. She's throwing a little bit of this stuff. That don't sound true. And some of this stuff is, I said, I want to find out more. So I decided I had friends, being in the military, I'd contact some of my friends at department of defense. And we went through Navy files and that along with television, internet, and books, I started pulling some information together. And one of them that I'd contacted, a guy up at the Pentagon, he, he lives here in Stanley County now, he decided to help me with some of the information, Ken Furr.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Ken Furr?

Tony Hill: Uh, yeah, he actually, he, he runs a winery now.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Oh Cool.

Tony Hill: And, um,

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: We might have to visit him. [Laughing]

Tony Hill: He has a nice place. It's nice too. He has real good wine. They have food and everything. They have taste tests and stuff and he's real super guy. And, uh, but anyway, he, with the help of him, he was actually my, he was actually my ranger commander. That's, that's what got me, you know, he was a ranger and commander, so he kind of helped. And, uh, but I got started in uh... Earl Gilbert. Uh, he's from Greensboro, North Carolina, now retired from the Pentagon. Uh, we were born exact same day, exact same hospital, exact same time and exact same hometown. When I was born in Greensboro and moved here, my mom and dad lived in Greensboro and I was born there. But then I came back here, uh, with my dad. Seven years old. Uh... Earl was working the Pentagon. So see, I had all these contacts, give me a little bit of heads up.

Tony Hill: So going through the department of Navy and department of defense, I found out that, uh, and they release it. They don't mind telling you now that the planes had a problem with the fuel and it had like a cantilever system that run, uh, I believe he said like off a cable, that if this engine, when they turned, if they banked left, this engine would rev up, the right engine would stall a little bit. So it helps the pilot do these quick maneuvers and maneuverability, and they're fighting that's, that was the design, but that design was flawed. This thing would catch. And not actually work. And a lot of pilots, they had crashed. Some of these bombers are testing to find out that this is not working exactly right, but they did not get it out to the pilots.

Tony Hill: The government wanted these planes out. We've got to get them out. Now we've got a war we need these now. And these planes came in and he was one of them. I'm sure he knew about the problem, but didn't know how to face the problem or the tactical wise with it. And listening to her story. All of this started coming together. Ms. Roosevelt, that you have a stall

engine, you got smoke. Okay. That's why they saw smoke coming from one of the engines. A stalled engine will throw smoke from his kerosene engine. I mean, what you expect, uh, and listening to her story, it started coming together and making sense of why this thing possibly could have happened. Well, with the release of that information Uh, my theory is not mine, actual fact. And my theory is he made the first pass perfectly fine. And did the wing, and the second pass is when he did it further and they said that he crashed. My aunt stood there, just mouth dropped. They heard the boom or the boom of the water crash and everything.

Tony Hill: Wasn't explosions, just hitting the water. The family stood there and all, but my uncle Al, uncle John, and, uh, dad all went down to the lake and by that time they were trying to send out people to see if they could find anything. Uh, it wasn't much longer, the Navy shows up and he say, please leave. You know, we don't want you around our plane.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: Uh, I don't know any more of that story.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Okay. Did that happen the same day?

Tony Hill: That was all in the same day. From what I understand that all happened in the same day.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: Uh, but then on the theory of him crashing is I think on the second go round, the plane malfunction, that the cantilever did not maneuver. And the cable did not work the properly, stalled the left engine over rev, the right engine, which would, which that's the way it was supposed to work, fuel up, and it drove the plane. She said, it looked like it just hit something and flipped.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Huh?

Tony Hill: Hmm. It ain't like it just dove straight in it. Actually, she said it looked like it just hit something.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Like an invisible wall.

Tony Hill: She said it hits so fast. He says, I can. She says, I see it to this day. I wish he was still alive. It'd be nice if y'all could talk to her. But she was 97 years old when I talked to her to her.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: So, she was just fishing for pleasure, or for family?

Tony Hill: Exactly. Yeah. For food.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: And she saw it. She said it was like it, like I said, it hit a wall. And just flip directly straight into the water. So that makes sense of the stalled engine over rev on the ride stall on the left and the plunge, because it was flying this way from what I understand flying this way.

Tony Hill: And that would cause the stall to go over. And they said, and people, I think, uh,

David Summerlin:, and several others, and Jim Harrison, a bunch of others, have said that you could, that when they were young or something that they heard, the engine sounded like it didn't sound right when it came across.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Okay yeah.

Tony Hill: Uh, you'll have to ask them, uh, they were born those times. Uh, yeah, they know more about probably the well, like Bill Ward, if he was around Dale's dad, uh, if I'm not mistaken, I think he's the one that collected the plane tire and then Kurt Dorsey wound up with it somehow. And then he wound up here. Yeah. And, uh, there's other parts I took that... was that it?

Deborah: It is the only thing was just the time. And then Jerry Hall that you called remembers as a child, seeing it right up here in the town of Abe, he remembers those sounds.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: He remembers the sounds? Okay.

Tony Hill: So it's something that didn't sound right when it come across anyway.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. Yeah.

Tony Hill: Uh, so I, I went ahead and then I, like I said, I got permission to be able to keep that information. They said, well, its old history, you know, it's grandfather clause. We don't care anymore. It's old, it's old news. Uh, so I called, I texted... well I emailed, uh, I think her name's Laura. I'm not sure whoever wrote the article. Laura Keene. I don't know. I saved all that stuff. Uh, hopefully, I've had my computer crash, uh, And I emailed her about it. And she says, please tell me more. Tell me, explain. So, I went through to explain, she emailed me back. She's I'm going to stick that in the book. Cause that's, that explains more of exactly why the plane crash, people are wanting to know why did it crash?

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Right.

Tony Hill: And so that brought it back up that flying tree-top high, stalled engine to the left, uh, overrun on the right. To drive the plane, he had no time whatsoever for correction and everybody, I hear stories of, he did this, he did that. He was wrong. He's only did one thing wrong. He, he evaded his flight pattern.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Right. Mhmm.

Tony Hill: He was not supposed to which you make that flight pattern. That is the only thing legally he would have been charged with. And he wouldn't have got a court martial in a time of war because of that, because he was an excellent Marine from what I understand. He had an excellent flight record. Uh, things that I've picked up in the past and on some of his records, he was an excellent Marine.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. Yeah.

Tony Hill: And you know, that was just something that, well, you've been in the army. I've worked with these guys. We had the black Hawks flying out here and one of them crashed years ago out here. And they said, well, no, that, that, that ain't military. I know good and well, it was. I was sitting there looking at him and I said, you asked the United States army, this is y'all's Cobra. And then, you know, they had the army out here real quick telling us civilians to get away from it. They put it on a trailer and covered it up with a tarp.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. [Laughing]

Tony Hill: Of course, the military is not going to, and, you know, for a fact that they are not going to tell you that actually happened, and the Navy denies it to

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: To this day. Now the Navy says, you know, he did deviate from his flight pattern. Uh, that was a malfunction in the engines that would've caused him to crash. What's done is done.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: Uh, one of the survivors, Becky, uh, his sister, she's passed now. Um, she received a lot of the stuff, the memorials and stuff for his death and stuff. Um, well, plus being married, he, she, Aunt Elizabeth received. That's the stuff that I had gotten, the flag, the uniforms and things like that. Uh, oh, there's so much more about all this. He, uh, now going down through the time with everybody, you know, you picking up all these stories and it's good to see that y'all are going to maybe put some of this curriculum straight,

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, try and put it all together.

Tony Hill: I mean, you know, and find out, maybe you might find out more information about it, you know, like only thing I know is he landed in Charlotte, suppose to go to cherry point and flew over, crashed, it's over.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: That's pretty much how I know. And, and, and that's all the family's ever said. And Elizabeth was one that, uh, never talked about it. Never. She was so heartbroken from it. She married a man named Joe Cutrell and that's who I lived with when I moved up here. She married Joe Cutrell, and they own the original farmhouse in Palmerville.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: And, uh, he bought it, he worked for paramount pictures.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Oh, wow.

Tony Hill: Yeah, he was the head regional manager of Paramount Pictures. So, uh, that's another story. So yeah, I got to meet some... a lot of actors.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Oh that's cool.

Tony Hill: Uh... but they could not maintain their marriage.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: Because all she could keep was... Charles. It was an unfinished life, you know, and it come to a point that finally they had three youngins, uh, three kids, uh, two girls and a boy, wait two boys and girl, and they separated. She lived in Charlotte. He lived here. Of course, he married again, and I was living with them then. Uh, but every time we go to visit, as I was young, you couldn't get nothing out of her about it. And I'm sure that's... she died young, and I think some of that's heartbreak.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. How old was she when she passed away?

Tony Hill: I couldn't tell you. I could not of been 30, 30, 40 years ago. She was younger. She was before her time, way before. Well, all my family has, my grandpa, my grandpa, my great grandpa died at, uh, 51. My grandpa died at 48. They were working here. Any one disease is heart attack. It runs in our family. I've had three.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Oh Wow. I know CPR. So you're good. [Laughing]

Tony Hill: Well, I'm fine now. It's been two years since my last. Right now, I'm just fighting these kidney stones. I have never had kidney stones in my life to hit me so hard and it don't even run in our family. They said, well, you're drinking too many mountain Dew's. I went, no, I drink too much water, too much. Lemonade in hand. Must be coming a water from ALCOA because well.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Maybe it's aluminum foil.

Tony Hill: You can't blame ALCOA because if it was everybody would have this problem, it's got to do something with me and my sister.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: I don't know what else more on there that...

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: We might want to cause it came up with some questions that we thought...

Patrick: Uh, yeah. Um, let's see. And we said that the Navy kind of was right on it shortly after.

Tony Hill: Yeah. The Navy, the Navy spent the day, as soon as the crash, they wan't even in distress.

Patrick: Yeah. So it makes you wonder what someone had to, someone else had to see that.

Tony Hill: Someone had to call in and say, Hey, you got a plane down. And I checked into that too, trying to find out through, through time who made that call?

Patrick: Who called to have that reaction?

Tony Hill: I mean, as fast as it did, and you look at the local papers, it shows the Navy come in that afternoon. Well, the Navy, being in Charleston, how did you get up here in three and a half hours that fast, that afternoon and was on it with Navy divers? Now from hearing from my aunts and uncles, the divers, even my dad said the dive and one of the divers came up and he was just bleeding profusely. And that comes from nitrogen buildup in your system coming up too fast. And he said, he'd come up so fast 'cause there was catfish down there, it could swallow man hole. But I believe that because I have seen some of the catfish at the dam when it's swirling... that we're going to need a bigger boat.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: The size of a Volkswagen...

Tony Hill: It remind you of Jaws. [laughing]

Deborah: My mom was like, they were catfish that loomed over you.

Tony Hill: Yeah. They said there was catfish big enough a man could stand up in his mouth. And I went now, wait, now you're talking about a killer whale.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, I heard that it's common around dams.

Tony Hill: That catfish went as far as swallowin' a man whole that could just swim up on him and do it. It makes you wonder because I had a friend, Jeff poplin, that drowned out here and when they finally hooked him, they had to hook him and they found him almost halfway out the lake. From where we were swimming here. And he had these bite marks.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: All the way around...

Tony Hill: Around this part of his legs, not only inside, just on the outside. And I went, wow. And they never, if you ever looked that up, they will not discuss that. That they just said he'd drown. I said no, this boy, he was an excellent swimmer. We were swimming. He went under, we didn't see no more out of it. That's all I can tell you. But then when they did bring him up, we noticed that the marks was on the legs around there. I said, man, whatever that was, its not normal. He's not the only one, records will show that many people been sucked under the water by something I ain't saying there's monsters.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Right, right. But we know catfish get big.

Tony Hill: And if they're big enough and as deep as that water, I mean that water is 175 ft. deep where the Plains and there's places as 150. And you got what they call sub floor.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: See, that was actually. It was actually a creek, Indian Creek and then the Creek Indians had their place out here. Uh, cottages were built down the lower portion of it. Uh, when Alcoa decided to flood that it was perfect. I mean, it was a perfect valley. That is the perfect valley down through this area. And, uh, It was perfect for water control. So what they did is they built, they were building the dams, they moved the people out there, from what I understand, there's even a church and a little small, it wasn't a big town. It was like a little village that was down into the bottom of it, near the Creek. And 'cause all it was, was a Creek from what I understand.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: So what they did is they flooded it well that left all those trees and then it made that subfloor. And when he crashed that plane, he went through the sub floor. And so to be able to that's why the divers said, there's no bringing that... that plane out and Wendy, of course, you know, she showed up and they wanted to do this excavation with everything. Uh, she's got the videos that shows the tip tail it's, it's like a sonar type picture. It ain't just show like a plain

picture, but, uh, you can contact her in Greensboro. Uh, I can't remember her last name, a lot of this stuff. I can write down...

Patrick: Cobalt.

Tony Hill: Cobalt. Yeah.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: She was a graduate of our program years ago.

Tony Hill: Oh okay.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. And then went on to work for DPAA defense, POW MIA county agency.

Patrick: It used to be what it was called... joint...

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Joint... Uh, it was, it was the old POW, the old MIA.

Tony Hill: Oh, okay.

Patrick: I can't remember. We used to under the acronym, but it's right. They became the DPAA. I think.

Tony Hill: Yeah, I know she came down and then they had this guy off coming out of Charlotte that wanted to bring the plane over. And, uh...

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Where did he come from?

Tony Hill: I don't know how he come out of this, but I made a fool out of him when I called him a liar right there on live television.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Oh nice. [Laughing]

Tony Hill: Yeah.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Not afraid of controversy.

Tony Hill: First of all, don't sit there and tell a lie on something that I knows the truth and, and think you going to get away with it 'cause I'll promise you, I'm not going to let you get away with it. The WSOC, uh, what was the high point channel 8? Uh, station was there. WSOC was there and the Greensboro, the Greensboro one was my cousin. She was of course from Greensboro area and she was a nice lady and she was out there and she's my first cousin. So, she was there and we had been out on the boat and we'd seen the sonars and I'd love to get the video. When they did the interview, basically I called him out on live TV. They were interviewing me but I didn't want to show my face. And neither did Ken. You know, they showed my old raggedy Kenny shoes down to the water, but we were talking about the history of the plane.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: And then this guy, they were interviewing him. He said, "Yeah. I walked on the fuselage of this plane." I heard that and I turned around and I said, you did what. "I walked on the fuselage of this plane is, uh, it's pretty much intact". I said, you're a liar. And this, you know, the camera's... [sound effect], they're coming down real quick, go live, go live. And I'll never forget, Carmen, we're going to get this. She looked at me, we're going to nail this. And I said, you're a liar. I said, we have just got through running sonar and captured pictures of the only thing sticking up his tail wing. I said, unless you got a chainsaw cut through the sub floor. Ain't no way you walked on there and I've been watching you didn't walk on the fuselage. I said, that's the biggest lie I've ever heard my whole entire life. I said, you ain't nut'n but a flat face liar. And he just, he bowed down. Of course, walked away from it. It was over with it. Nailed his hide from there. Wendy is just laughing, she says, he ain't afraid of nothing.

Tony Hill: It's funny. They know they do have the location of the plane. They have what they call brass markers. Uh, if you'll go down here to the lake, you'll find the markers.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: It's like the geodetic marker?

Tony Hill: Yeah, that's exactly what they are. They have them in three points. One is as you're coming up to the lake, it's right there where the picnic tables is.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Okay.

Tony Hill: There'll be one. There you go. Hang out and go look for it because grass grew over it now, but you got a metal detector, you can find it real quick. They're about this big, dark worn brass. They put one there. One is, uh, over here at the Indian reservation. I'm in the Indian place. So you're not gonna be able to do that one. Uh, cause they won't let you out over there at Hardaway. Yeah. They're not gonna let you one was there. And the other one is across the river. You walk into the, what we call the concrete, used to be a fishing pier. There's a concrete pad down there, right there at the power lines. And you take a left and you put the lake to each side of your out here and look dead straight across the other one is directly across from it. And then it's a three point system to identify exactly where the plane is and it gives you, it actually, it gives you the measurements to it, to, from that point,

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: From that point, okay.

Tony Hill: So as far as where the location is, but you can't touch it. The Navy, uh, the Navy came down that with the family. And uh, the Navy said...

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Okay, when was that, roughly? Do you remember?

Tony Hill: It was like four or five days later. We met with the Navy. Well, I actually, I think Wendy got that thing set up, cause this guy was trying to take the plane and he had said, I'll bring the plane up. We'll spend the millions on it to bring it up, but we're going to locate it in Charlotte and we're going, no, that ain't going to happen. You put it back here on ground or else that's not going to happen.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Right.

Tony Hill: So, I think that's when Wendy got involved with stopping what was going on with this guy planning and he said I've already sunk over \$30,000 into doing... so overall your problem.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. Yeah. Sounds like a personal problem.

Tony Hill: Well, I told her earlier, I said, well, you know, a hundred, 150, \$200 million and I'll... I'm the last survivor of the signer on signing the waiver back over. Get outta this town. But, uh, no, I'll be here till I'm gone.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: Uh, but what happened was Wendy had gotten a hold of the Navy somehow, how she did the Navy department or whatever, she could help you more there. Uh, the Navy came in to discuss it with the family. And Becky came down, my uncle, Robert, aunt Sara and, uh, dad and I were down, we all met with the Navy with a couple of Navy officers and what they had done, it says, okay, well, we're going to is the plane is ours. But, the bones are y'all's so. He more or less said that. And he said, but because it's now a grave site, we want to give this over to the family more or less, you'll be you had the say. So whether the plane comes up or not, we don't want to be involved with it anymore.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, custodian basically.

Tony Hill: So I was the last signer. So, uh, well, my signature was the last one on there and they're all gone now. So as it goes down line, I guess I'm the only one that can say yes, touch it. No touch it.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Did they take the paperwork back with them or did they...?

Tony Hill: Yeah, paperwork went back with the, with the Navy and we were supposed to get copies, but I evidently the family has not passed none of it down. I haven't seen anything. Uh, I

don't know any more about it. I just know you remember that day. I remember signing and I thought, God, I'm going in the Navy is what I really thought, but I've signed so much paper in my life, you know how the military are. [Laughing]

Tony Hill: But, uh, yeah. And, and that was a good thing, but the Navy more or less has to say, so.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: What can go and what can go about it. But right now it's all denied and it's on a permanent fixture that it can never be brought up. And I don't think there's enough money for people to even think they could bring that plane up.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: It would be nice. It would be nice to see it brought up restored. Uh, have a, as far as the bodies, they never could find the bodies. I mean, they actually, that they said the Navy divers went into the plane. Could not find the bodies, the bodies were gone, But you're looking at another, what's the tree a hundred, 125 ft. down from where the plane from the final rock bottom, the bedrock, the bodies could have went through the current they could have, or anything could have happened. That could have been shredded.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: You know, I mean, you know, and that night they had the Navy there, surely the bodies had'nt composed enough for them not to find 'em, but they never found the bodies never found uniforms, helmets, nothing. Its like plane just crash and they got zapped up by UFO's or something. I mean, they just...

Patrick: You know, I was just thinking, well, when you're talking that, there's a fellow, we both know, um, he's a general in the air force, uh, Gentry that, uh, he. He was a pilot doing, you know, different aircraft, but one of his jobs was, uh, aircraft.

Tony Hill: Wasn't an Eric Gentry was it?

Patrick: Uh, uh, no, no, no, no, no, no, not that. [Laughing]

Tony Hill: I know an Eric Gentry, that's why I ask. He was air force. He was a Colonel too.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Alan. No, it's not Alan. It's something like really interesting.

Patrick: Yeah. It's an unusual first name.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, an unusual first name.

Patrick: He was a post commander, I think, over in Guam for one of the bases. And, uh, but he was an air traffic accident investigator is a part of his jobs, any he's a big WWII buff. And um, he actually, he helped us out on some stuff we were looking at.

Tony Hill: Right.

Patrick: Um, cause we couldn't figure out why we were seeing all these expended shells everywhere near some sites we were looking at. And he was the one that goes well, when, if they're fully armed and they crashed, the bullets are going to go off because of the, um, the, the impact and everything.

Tony Hill: Yeah, the impact. And um, He, uh, uh, he would, I was thinking about the causes he would, he's the one that would know, okay, this is what happens in this type of aircraft at this speed, this angle, what, where someone's remains would most likely be in relation to the aircraft? It gets you at least into a ballpark. Um, because that's, that's the strange thing I read some of that Navy background. And, uh, and that, that I was at the same thing. I said, I cannot believe they didn't find a thing. They didn't find their life saving equipment.

Tony Hill: Yeah.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, it's odd.

Patrick: Uh, you know, and I'm wondering maybe...

Tony Hill: Yeah, they didn't find no bullions, are they bouys? I mean, they didn't find anything. All they found was the plain empty cockpits. I mean, you gotta think about that. They're strapped in, how did it, how did it knock two pilots, a pilot and co-pilot out of a plane and the front end nose was damaged, but not destroyed. The glass was blown out. Now they did say that the glass was missing on the front end, but that still don't explain the strapped in pilots with the seats there. The seatbelts, you know, the seats are gone, the seatbelts were gone. It's like, it just sucked them right out, seats and everything.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Well, I wonder if there was like a last minute, uh, attempt to eject or something, or...

Patrick: Bail out.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: It makes you wonder about that, but there's no, that plane was not built for ejection.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: No, right.

Tony Hill: It was called a bail-out. You rode in the side door ejunked, or you crashed with the plane. This, this is a, B-25 bomber.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, and it happened really quickly.

Tony Hill: Yeah, it was no arsenal. I mean, there's no arsenal on it whatsoever. No loaded ammunition, nothing. Uh, the recovery was just a recovery due to the Navy sake. They don't want the enemy or anybody to really know what's going on. I think they're also trying to cover up that part of why it crashed.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Sure, sure.

Tony Hill: But would it be in where it's at, where it happened. It got hush-hush. You'll find out, even in the news and the old news to you pull up some, go to the Stanley news and press, pull up some of the old news articles. It was hush-hush. It was real quiet, real fast, but that's the military.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: I mean, I'm not going to cut them down cause that that's them.

Patrick: That's what it's supposed to be in the context of the time we're considering it was North Carolina, '44. D-day had just happened. And we had, meanwhile, we had German submarines parked right off the coast.

Tony Hill: Right off the coast. Right. And you just can't start throwing things out there. Like it did news media. I don't mean to be mean with them, but they just, they're the ones that really make things uncovered that messes up the war and I know bad things happen. I know some things happen. So I'm not goin' to say more about that, but that's why it was a hush hush so quick, when the media starts getting involved, you gotta shut up.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. Yeah.

Tony Hill: You gotta be quiet. Uh, you gotta rethink this thing and there's what they call is give them what they need, but not what they want. [Laughing]

Patrick: And, and, uh, you know, uh, you know, they, they probably, with the, with the Navy getting there so quick, they probably were trying to control the scene

Tony Hill: Control the scene. The same thing woulda happened when this Cobra went down. The army was there so fast. I mean, I thought who contact them, but with the armies and the Army's military, you know, the way they got the equipment, these days, it's expected to show up real quick. Cause I worked with black Hawks or I was working with these guys with the black Hawks and they had one smoke up and it went down, it was going down real quick and they

landed it real quick. And then what, no time they had a tractor trailer in there and I mean, it wasn't like three or four hours tractor trailer was in there and they craned it up, off it went.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: That's technology, but WWII, who turned that plane, who turned that over to somebody that quick.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Could it have been the, um...

Tony Hill: The civilians?

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: It could have been the dam owners, you know, or something, you know, like Alcoa, like somebody was like...

Tony Hill: No, well one of the plane crashes in between the two dams and the closest one would be, you know, Falls.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, I just, I wonder if it might, they would have anything that would fall in those dams would be...

Tony Hill: I guess that would be, it would be Narrows. Narrows would be the closer, because the next one's High Rock.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: So...

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: I imagine you're on a pretty tight recording security...

Tony Hill: On public property. You can't do that for on private property. I don't want to be one of those Karen's. [Laughing] No, I'm not like that, man.

Tony Hill: Well, it's too bad that y'all are doing this now.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: I know.

Tony Hill: Roy Holbrook. Uh, was in the air force and he had a lot of information with about those planes. He was, he flew one of those planes. He would have been actually he's one of them. He's Holbrook from Albemarle, his, his daughter, Susan. We went to school together and I used to go over all the time cause I loved the man to death, but he would talk about the planes and he said, one day, I'm gonna sit down with you about your uncle. And I was, I've always kept saying, let's do this, let's do this. Let's do it. I wished he had, but Roy Holbrook was like I said, he was an air force and he was in the air force pilot and he knew a lot about what was going on. And he flew some of those when he was with the Navy. So, and then he went over into the air force and flew fighter jets. You know, you remember whole Roy Holbrook, you.

David Summerlin: I remember the name.

Tony Hill: And uh, he knew quite a bit of information, but like I said, he's done past now. A lot of that information's gone.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Some, some pilots have talked about, like, I know it's recorded in like the library of Congress, um, where they recorded pilots and their experiences flying. So it actually be worthwhile looking at...

Tony Hill: You might, could look into something... well weren't you, weren't you a little boy when all that...

David Summerlin: Yeah. Yeah. I was a little boy you're right. I was three years old when I came to Baden in 1941. So, I was probably six, seven years old when this happened.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. Yeah. Okay.

Tony Hill: Yep. And I think it was, was it, was it Bill that got the tire and got it and Curt got it from Bill?

David Summerlin: Bill...

Tony Hill: Ward.

David Summerlin: I think it was.

Tony Hill: Dutchy... Dutchy had got the tire off the plane, didn't he?..... Who?.... Oh, the man.

Unknown: It was Tom Kirk who got the tire.

Tony Hill: I thought Dutchy got the tire and Curt got it from Dutchy.

David Summerlin: I thought he did too.

Tony Hill: That, see, that shows you how stories have been manipulated through about this plane....

[Background talk]

Patrick: Nah, I'll be fine 'cause I'm going to, uh, I'm going to go see Curt here in a minute. He's going to be at 1:30.

Tony Hill: Yeah. Curt would be a good one because he, he was wound up with some stuff.

Patrick: And that's what I was going to ask you about that tire is, uh, um, how many people do you reckon, uh, might've repurposed, like got records from there and kind of like that tire, like they just...

Tony Hill: Well, I'll tell you one place that it's the old Heel. My uncle Robert's old place down there. There's a couple homes down there. One of, one of those Coggins, the old Coggins homes down there on the right where uncle Robert used to live on Palmerville, there's three homes together. And the one on the far left used to be the oldest home in Palmerville, but it, lightning hit it.

Patrick: Oh no.

Tony Hill: It was my uncle Robert Heels and yeah, I was, I was there when all that happened. Uh, and they rebuilt, they tore down the house and rebuild it. But anyway, what's the name of that drive, David? Is it Coggins Hill?

David Summerlin: Say my...

Tony Hill: Coggins Hill drive. It's just a little circle driveway with three homes. You may be able to go down there. Now the one guy on the far, right? He's a pretty nice guy. I don't know the guy in the middle, but the guy on the far right. They used to store, they used to be a grinding mill there. Uh there's yeah. It used to be an old grinding mill in the grist mill in there and the ground corn and things like that. It was still there to this day. As far as I know, uh, it ran by a mule, then they convert it to machine. A reason I know is my in-laws lived there, rented it. And I used to go in that old barn, but there was old stuff in there. I'm wondering if plane parts could have been an old place like it, and then you got, you got old... What's his name? Willis his place. He probably collected everythin' there is.

David Summerlin: I've always heard though. There wasn't much floatin'.

Tony Hill: That's what I've heard. I've never heard. There was hardly anything floating, but as far as some people getting stuff and not telling you, you know, look at the tire, look how many years it took for them to finally throw the tire out there and you know, there could have been, there could have been anything. I mean, I don't know. I've heard that there was particles of the plane came off. I've heard.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Right.

Tony Hill: You don't know, but if you go down there and try and talk to one of those homeowners, there's so much old stuff down there. They might know something about, about it now. Most of the elderly people are gone now and you're kind of late to find people that's been around. You've got dinosaurs. Like David here [Laughing] he's not to soon walk her up there.

David Summerlin: You've got deep deep water out there, its in the deep.

Tony Hill: Yeah. Yeah. It's and like I said, this is what they did...

Patrick: They, and then, uh, it was going to, I don't think I was, uh, what, uh, y'all have, do you have any idea on, um, any possible risks to the site in the future? Like, or you have any concerns of anything,

Tony Hill: That'll be at Cube. Hell the Cube don't even own it now, do they?

David Summerlin: Somebody else...

Tony Hill: Somebody else has got it. Now it's another company. Uh, that'll be up to them. Yeah. I mean...

David Summerlin: I don't know if they own the water ways or not. They just bought the dams didn't they?

Tony Hill: I'm not sure. I think, I thought Alcoa still owned all the right away.

David Summerlin: They still own some of that land...

Tony Hill: Because the land under the water is what Alcoa owns and I think that's called the right of way, although yeah, the waterways.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: So, there's like bottom lands that, um, states own, um, and so sometimes states...

Tony Hill: Yeah, see the Creek can't be owned. It can't be owned by nobody, but after the Creek spreads out, it's used to land on that side of the Creek that comes owned. It's weird. Trust me. I've done check into that and Alcoa still own the property. That's why they own the waterway through it all. And they have the rights to what they can say happens. And I think Alcoa kept all the waterways and Cube bought just the dams.

Deborah: Eagles sales pulled off and it's Eagle rock or something Canadian that bought it.

Tony Hill: Well, which is China.

Tony Hill: He wants to clear up one conspiracy theory and start three or four more. [Laughing]

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Well...

Tony Hill: We won't get into it.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: If you had an idea of what you wanted to happen to the site, would you... so you said that you, you would love to have it recovered down the line.

Tony Hill: If I had the choice and I had to sign the paperwork is if you had brought the plane up, you would either park it. You couldn't park it here, but put it over here, back in the park.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Tony Hill: That would be my choice. Whoever wanted to pay for it, that'd be fine.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yep.

Tony Hill: But it's the stay here. If it can't stay here for the museum and the museum and I would turn it completely over to the museum, it would, it, it would be the museums. That would be my choice. It would be no, no other choice behind it. And it'd be Baden. It belongs to Baden. It belongs to us, to the people here and it belongs to those that's put history here, but if it was put, it'd be putting old ballpark, uh, and fixed where it could be watched. Because you got kids that they love to damage stuff, and they'd love to climb in it and tear it up there. But you could have tours. The museum could set up kind of tours to have an onboard because there's two doors. You can walk him one way. Look. Walk out the other, that would be kind of nice.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. Have you been in any of the historic B-25?

Tony Hill: I've been in the old planes. You jumped out of the one 30. So he said, oh yeah, but as far as the old historical plane, yeah. I go to Fayetteville. Fayetteville has a lot of the air show. We used to have the old air shows and stuff and the Mustang. And one of the most favorite parts I

ever did is we was right before Pope was turned over to Brag. We were down there and they had the ATNS. Now that's my favorite angels on our shoulders. Uh, there's nothing like an ATN and It's a military base and we were sitting down there and the Colonel was, my son was one of the, the CAPs or whatever they call it and things with the kids, with the, in the military thing. Uh, yeah. Anyway, he was with that air force thing, uh, with them, it's like ROTC, but it's called something. It's like CAPC

Patrick: Civilian Air Patrol

Tony Hill: Patrol, and, uh, He was in that and then, so we get to go Pope and we sit in there and I said, you know, I said, I've got to see them work. I've heard them burp. I've seen 'em many, a times do things. I said, one thing I like to do in my life before I do anything else, he said, what's that? I started like sit down in one of them. Well, I can't authorize that, but I can turn my back. [Laughing] And, uh, he turned his back and sure enough, I climbed up and sat in and I said, how do you start this thing? And he says, you're not going to start that with push buttons is that thing has to be started a different, a different way. It's not just started with pushing, but I actually got to setting one. And, uh, I enjoyed that. But as far as the Mustangs, I set in one, uh, down in Fayetteville and I sat in one of the, between the only be 25 I knew of was the one in Wisconsin. Then I went to see. Sister and brother-in-law, that was actually restored. And, uh, some guy headed up there to a museum thing. And then of course, you've got, Greensboro's got the old Mustang sets out there at the old battlegrounds. I played on that. I mean, he, at times, uh, as far as old planes, yeah. I've, I've sat in the many of them and I, I, I know we've got better technology stuff going down. It'd be hard to fight with them but give me the old stuff.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: They're pretty cool.

Tony Hill: And she's like, mom, great-grandfather's rifles, shotgun. You know, they went through the revolutionary war. They'd been through the civil war, Daniel Kirk verified it. Uh, he was, he was like, daddy's second, third cousin. I can't remember how that kinfolk part is. Uh, cause about everybody in Palmerville's kin to eachother, and you had the Dees, you had the Kirks, you had the Coggin's, you had the Heel's, you had the Deeburrys, uh, what was the, what was his last name? He, him and his sister lived together and they he,. He, he killed himself and his sister down there on the right, uh, right before you get the Ms. Little, Ed's mother-in-law? He lived right there on the right, in the brick home with her kids, him and his sister. And he killed himself and his sister long time ago. I remember it. I was a teenager when it happened. He's got an odd name.

David Summerlin: Oh, what are you talkin' about?

Tony Hill: Uh, alright. You know where Aunt Dee's place was?

David Summerlin: In Palmerville?

Tony Hill: In Palmerville. Okay. You come back up a little bit and you had Ms. Little's, it's mother-in-law okay. Then you come back up a little bit more and there's the brick home across from the old Kirk.

David Summerlin: Okay.

Tony Hill: That was another brick home right there on the right. What was it? Jay? Jay Judd. I can't remember. Anyway, he was, he killed himself. Any sister, they lived there forever. And, uh, there's things happening in Palmerville that... Well, it's like the ghost they people say they see down here in the cemetery. I'll sit down here. I don't know how many times looking for them and I ain't seen lick. [Laughing]

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: It depends on if you're there on Friday or Saturday night?

Tony Hill: I've heard it. I've heard about the black shadow that show up early, to the black shadow that walked in this graveyard. And, and I've been down there so many times and set up all night long and waited, uh, frightened. I said, I want to ask him what's he doin'. I'm just, I'd like to know. I like knowing stuff like that. I miss the kind of person that likes to seek this kind of stuff out. I just...

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. Fun. Well, if we have any, 'cause we'll probably have to wrap it up and grab a bite to eat real quick before we do another one. If there's, if there's something, is there something that comes up or...

Tony Hill: Something I can think and I'll try to, I'll try to dig some of this stuff out.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. I mean, we'd love to take photos of any records you have or, you know, I mean, I'm not saying...

Tony Hill: All I did is I planted it all back. It's covered up. Dug straight way back in the back of the dang room. And I just don't feel like digging it up, but I need to, because if something does happen to me, I want it to get here. I want it to stay here.

[End of interview, logistics discussion now] Time: 52:40

2 Larry Drye Interview

14 September 2021

Jennifer McKinnon: [00:00:00] Okay. We'll get started there and I'm going to turn on my phone.

Okay. So, um, you know, as we said, we're from ECU, we're interested in the B-25, um, and just collecting oral histories from locals. Um, who, you know, have a background or a history about the site. And so, we were excited to hear that you were, um, you know, a child and have some memories of that. A lot of it sort of second hand too. So, we're also interested in taking the, you know, information about the sort of secondhand – what's been passed along. Um, cause it's important to understand it as sort of like a community memory...

Larry Drye: Yeah.

Jennifer McKinnon: ...um, over time. And so, we will use the, um, the oral histories to sorta create, you know, a community understanding of that, um, event, um, and the past.

And then we were hoping to kind of put together sort of like a little [00:01:00] online, um, thing that you could visit, you know, where you can. Click on and look at the different locations of, um, objects or artifacts or people that are related to the story or sites. So basically, we would start off with, you know, if you could just tell us what your, your name is, um, and your background here, um, in, in Baden.

Larry Drye: Okay...I'm Larry Drye, D-R-Y-E. I was born here. In the hospital right down there.

Jennifer McKinnon: Mhmm.

Larry Drye: My memory is, I was with my grandfather riding with him...I don't know...but he used to sell milk – so they had cows. Maybe I was just riding along with him, but anyway, we were coming from up north from Palmerville or near London [00:02:00] and came across where the railroad track is. And that's when I saw a military truck backed up to the water and they were loading a... I don't know if it was the nosewheel or one of the wings...

Jennifer McKinnon: ...mhmm...

Larry Drye: ...the wheels, the folding wheels...

Jennifer McKinnon: ...uh huh...

Larry Drye: ...they were loading one of those on to the back of the truck.

Jennifer McKinnon: Okay.

Larry Drye: And I've always assumed, or thought that that must have been the day it happened, but it could not have been, they wouldn't have had the military in there diving...

Jennifer McKinnon: ... straight away...

Larry Drye: ...on that day. It would have been too late. So, it must've been the next day.

Jennifer McKinnon: Okay, yeah.

Larry Drye: And I just realized that this morning.

Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Larry Drye: Um, and that's all. [00:03:00] I don't remember any conversations about it, and I never mentioned it to my grandfather again, and anybody that might know in the family has gone. And that's about my knowledge...

Jennifer McKinnon: ...your knowledge of it.

Larry Drye: Except for what I've seen and heard other people say.

Jennifer McKinnon: Okay, I mean, maybe going into a little bit of that too, would be helpful because we're just trying to get, you know, sort of, everybody's you know, take on things.

Larry Drye: Yeah, well I think mostly, anybody I would think of, you've already got on your list to be interviewed. Um, as far as direct knowledge, that is all I can remember.

Jennifer McKinnon: Okay. Was your, um, so your grandfather, were y'all on a, um, on a wagon or...when he delivered milk? What happened? What was the-

Larry Drye: This was something he did on the side...

Jennifer McKinnon: ...on the side...

Larry Drye: ...being a farmer, and then they [00:04:00] moved here and he just kept it up. And I remember going out with him making milk deliveries.

Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Larry Drye: I guess he was taking care of me. Yeah, I don't know.

Jennifer McKinnon: So, he was, um, so he had a farm, so he had milk cows and he would just do that on the side.

Larry Drye: Yeah, also he was employed over here at the plant.

Jennifer McKinnon: Okay. That was his full-time job?

Larry Drye: Yeah, yeah. So, uh....

Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Larry Drye: So that was, and that's about it.

Jennifer McKinnon: Mmkay. Yeah.

Larry Drye: Pretty skimpy.

Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, no, I mean it helps to get context.

Larry Drye: That's just my direct -

Jennifer McKinnon: Memory.

Larry Drye: Memory.

Jennifer McKinnon: And do you remember where – the location? I know it's...when you're five, it's hard to know where you're at, but do you remember sort of the location of where that military vehicle was?

Larry Drye: Yeah. Um, it's between here and the railroad tracks...where you cross railroad tracks; [00:05:00] some water. I mean, land that jets out there and it's always been there and still is. And the truck was backed up there and that's where they were loading.

Jennifer McKinnon: Okay. And it's the railroad tracks that cross the road, right?

Larry Drye: Yeah, from up on that end.

Jennifer McKinnon: Kinda near the boat ramp. Is it kinda near...?

Larry Drye: Yeah, before you get...before you get to that point.

Jennifer McKinnon: Okay.

Larry Drye: Uh, there used to be a pier there at first, between [inaudible] but that's been torn down. It was um...ya know, looking back up this way. It would- would've been to the right on this side of the water.

Jennifer McKinnon: Okay.

Larry Drye: That's about it

Jennifer McKinnon: Okay. That's helpful. Just- do you have any questions, Pat?

Patrick Smith: Uh, Uh, how long has your family lived in the region, sir?

Larry Drye: We moved here in, uh, 1929. [00:06:00]

Jennifer McKinnon: Did they move for the, for the position? The job here?

Larry Drye: Yeah.

Jennifer McKinnon: Okay, so your grandfather started at, um, at the...the company?

Larry Drye: Yeah. In fact, they moved into an apartment, which was where that brick building is there.

Jennifer McKinnon: Okay.

Larry Drye: Um, but that's been – that building was torn down and moved to Albemarle. The four-apartment building. And it's amazing how they can do stuff like that, with a couple mules and whatever they had...

David Summerlin: You're not talkin' about the post office?

Larry Drye: No.

David Summerlin: You're talking about...it's a house here...

Larry Drye: Yeah, the, uh, beauty shop.

Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, the beauty shop, okay. So that was a continuation of these apartments all the way to there? Okay. And is that where you grew up? Did you [00:07:00] grow up in the apartments there...

Larry Drye: No.

Jennifer McKinnon: Or was that just...

Larry Drye: This was just my grandparents. My father and his brothers. That's where they moved to.

Jennifer McKinnon: Okay.

Larry Drye: And a course I wasn't around then. I said this was in '45. Uh, '44, whenever uh, plane went down.

Patrick Smith: Do you remember, uh, if any of the townsfolk talk about finding parts of the aircraft or anything?

Larry Drye: Not back then. Course uh, over the years, I've heard about different things. People found radio tubes floating in the water and so forth. [inaudible] Is Jerry going to be here today?

David Summerlin: I think [00:08:00] Jerry supposed to be coming by.

Larry Drye: They haven't been able to get in touch with him. I just want...

David Summerlin: I never know when he's coming or not.

Jennifer McKinnon: Do you have any thoughts about what you would like to see if, if there was to be a Memorial or something about, you know, the plane? Um, have ya thought about it at all. Whether, you know, they should bring it up or, you know, any kind of additional...brought up?

Larry Drye: It just...it went down in trees cause that, that land was never cut. It's a hundred seventy-five ft. deep. Course, it's been filled in with mud and everything else over the years, it would be a major...

Jennifer McKinnon: ...major undertaking. Yeah. I wonder if that piece of plane that you saw being loaded on the truck was something that floated to the surface or was part of like, um, a salvage, you [00:09:00] know, diving, salvage rescue.

Larry Drye: I don't know. It coulda been.

Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. Cause sometimes you have plane parts that will float to the surface.

Larry Drye: Yeah.

Jennifer McKinnon: Um, but then, you know, things that are rather heavy, like landing gear, um, you know, it is, um, gonna sink faster because it has the iron on it, whereas like a piece of wing or something like that sometimes can float uh, cause it's aluminum and has a flatter surface.

Larry Drye: I don't know. Um...

Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Larry Drye: It would be hard to, to float.

Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. Yeah.

Larry Drye: But, but I don't know how much salvage they got into. I've always heard they didn't even find the bodies in the cockpit, but if that's true or not, I do not know.

Jennifer McKinnon: Mhmm, okay. Um...anything else, Pat?

Patrick Smith: Uh, uh, really...yeah. [00:10:00] Uh, you know, we think about the museum, or is there anything that you would like to see in the museum, uh, or any ideas about how to do further commemoration for folks in the lake, or...?

Larry Drye: I don't know, we've got so much written history from different people, uh, course we got this, this marker out here in the yard. It's got descriptions of the...the guys on the plane. Um, I don't, I would hate to see it brought up. That's like digging up a graveyard to me.

Jennifer McKinnon: There may be some opportunity to get, um, um, you know, locations and images using like a, um, a sonar that you can drop over the side. [00:11:00] You know, and get like a sector scan, like a 360 degree scan, um, just for the location. But yeah, I think based on what we've heard from most community members about memories and information, it seems like it might not be in great shape.

Um, and it would be a real difficult recovery and a lot of money, you know, to recover something like that. So...Yeah.

Stephanie Sterling: Do you, uh, do you uh... and you said you were five...

Larry Drye: I was born in 39. I was about five.

Stephanie Sterling: I'm just curious about like what the atmosphere was like after that happened in town. I mean, was there sort of-

Larry Drye: -that is about all I remember about the whole thing. Cause I was just so far removed from it. Other than if it hadn't been for my grandpa, I probably wouldn't have known it ever happened until I got active here.[00:12:00] There are people who saw it. And heard it. I don't remember that day at all.

Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. Well, that's, I mean, that's helpful to have like a firsthand account of seeing something, cause that starts to add pieces, you know, to the, um, story, which is really nice. And we can, you know, put a little pin on a map to say, you know, that's where you drove by. What was your grandfather's name?

Larry Drye: Arthur.

Jennifer McKinnon: Arthur.

Larry Drye: Drye.

Jennifer McKinnon: Drye. Okay...and were, were y'all on a truck or were you in a wagon? Do you remember? It's hard to remember.

Larry Drye: My memory...we were in a car.

Jennifer McKinnon: In a car. Okay. Yup. And he worked for...

Larry Drye: Alcoa.

Jennifer McKinnon: Alcoa. And he moved here for that job. Okay. [00:13:00] And then your, um, your grandmother was she, um...

Larry Drye: ...she, she stayed at home.

Jennifer McKinnon: She stayed at home and raised the kids and...

Larry Drye: ...with five or six kids...

Jennifer McKinnon: Okay, yeah. And what was the, um, order of your dad and the kids?

Larry Drye: He was the oldest.

Jennifer McKinnon: He was the oldest. Okay. Alright. And would he have been working at, at the time or...?

Larry Drye: Yeah.

Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Larry Drye: Oh, wait a minute. I don't know. You know, I never talked about that cause he was in the CVs and he was at one point, he was stationed in Guam...

Jennifer McKinnon: ...okay...

Larry Drye: ...but whether he was here in town, when that happened, I don't know.

Jennifer McKinnon: Wow. So, he would have been, um, deployed at some point in the Pacific. Okay.

Larry Drye: I think it may have been he was [00:14:00] overseas towards the end of the war.

Jennifer McKinnon: Okay. Yeah. Well, CVs had a lot to do towards the end in the Pacific, so.

Larry Drye: And that's, yeah, I just don't remember...

Jennifer McKinnon: ...whether he was...well, that might've been why you were with your grandfather. Is your mom, was your mom working or...

Larry Drye: No.

Jennifer McKinnon: No, she was home too?

Larry Drye: She didn't go to work. Uh, my grandmother, to my knowledge, I can't remember her ever working, other than keeping up with five or six kids...

Jennifer McKinnon: ...yeah, that's a lot of work in itself, innit?

Larry Drye: My mother went to work about the time us and the kids got to be school-age, and then she went to work then, but other than that um, [00:15:00] there's just nobody that I think that would even, would know.

Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. Yep.

Larry Drye: I mean as far as family.

Jennifer McKinnon: Mhmm. Okay. Well, that's interesting your, your dad was in the CVs in Guam. I've done a lot of research out in the Mariana Islands. I've worked a lot on the Battle of Saipan and then the invasion of Tinian. And, uh, so, um, read a lot of records about CVs in that area.

Larry Drye: Yeah, I got a picture...somewhere...of he and couple a his buddies sitting on the...[inaudible]...over in Guam...

Jennifer McKinnon: In Guam? Yeah.

Larry Drye: [inaudible].

Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. Well, there were a lot of North Carolina, you know, men who were enlisted and, and spent a lot of time in the Pacific. So, you can't really [00:16:00] swing a stick without running into somebody who was related to somebody who was in the Pacific and North Carolina. I feel like, yeah...

Larry Drye: Yeah. He, um – my dad – got, he may have been called in um, uh, called up cause with three kids...

Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Larry Drye: And, uh...

Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Larry Drye: He was late then on the list.

Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. And then he came back after the war ended?

Larry Drye: Yeah.

Jennifer McKinnon: And did he get a job locally? Or?

Larry Drye: Yeah, he was already working over here.

Jennifer McKinnon: Okay. Yeah.

Larry Drye: Went back to work over at the plant as a welder.

Jennifer McKinnon: Okay.

Larry Drye: That's what he did the rest of his years.

Jennifer McKinnon: Do you remember what your grandfather's job was at Alcoa?

Larry Drye: He drove the trash truck and see, Alcoa picked up all of the garbage and everything and took it over to the town dump. [00:17:00] And just dumped it off the side of a hill over there.

Jennifer McKinnon: Yup. That's how you do it back in the day,

Larry Drye: You're still hearing about those things.

Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, I bet.

Larry Drye: David, do you, do you remember that crowd that came in here and said they sent divers down to the plane and they found it and they had attached a marker to it?

David Summerlin: I've heard that story, but I don't know a whole lot about it...

Larry Drye: ...but I don't remember who that was or anything, they claimed that they had found it, but...

David Summerlin: Lawrence, who that was, I don't know.

Jennifer McKinnon: We heard a little bit about that, um, from somebody else. And it was, um, they said that it was, um, people who wanted to recover it from South Carolina. Um, some divers from South Carolina that wanted to recover it and the family wasn't [00:18:00] interested, you know, in recovering and, uh, so...

And then there was also, you know, maybe, um, investigations in the nineties, um, with um, that as well. So, guess there's been a couple folks and now we're in another iteration, but mostly interested in collecting oral histories and the community memory of that. Um, and, um, sort of maybe trying to determine exactly where it's at and actually have a record of where it's at so, if we can drop a sonar over the side and get an image of it, at least we could clear up what kind of, um, uh, condition it's in. You know, cause, I think some people think that it's really torn up and some people think that it could be completely intact and so there's differing opinions and ideas about what, what, you know, what it might be like. [00:19:00] So that I think would help, maybe, the community and kind of, you know, further putting this to rest, but also commemorating it as well.

So, if it's in pieces you know, maybe people will stop thinking about, "oh, we need to recover it," but if it's, you know, fully intact, you know, can't be just a resting place, a grave site, you know? So that might help kind of clear some things up.

Larry Drye: Yeah, it would be difficult.

Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Larry Drye: In those trees.

Jennifer McKinnon: Sure. Yep. And then the silt, I mean, all the silt that might be covering it, you know, from just running down. So. Could it be buried, you know? I mean, those are all questions that...

Larry Drye: ...yeah, it could be at this point...

Jennifer McKinnon: ...we have. Yeah.

Larry Drye: All that mud's come down the river...

Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. Just kind of pushes down. Well, I appreciate it...

Larry Drye: That's about all I got.

Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, I appreciate you...

Patrick Smith: Appreciate your time.

Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. And we have, um, Pat's - if you want to, yep - get a [00:20:00] signature. He's um, sorta filled out a little bit of information and maybe if you don't mind signing, just, it's just saying that we've recorded your voice and we're using it for, um, education... [END]

3 Curt Dorsey: Interview

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Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Start recording and then I'll do this one. Alright, there we go. Perfect.

Curt Dorsey: So as a small child, let's say second third grade I already knew the story. You know my school teacher tell me-- told us about it and I had family members that told us about it that he flew over his farm stead and his new wife was out there with his mother and they were givin' him the wave and the plane starts going down. In any event, since about 1980, 81' something like that is when I bought the little farmstead that he grew up on. So, I lived there a couple of years to fix it up. It was 111 years old when I bought it wasn't-- there wasn't anything, it was just an old farmhouse sort of building type of thing. But nice location, I knew the lake was right there. So I wanted it cause of the location. So, you know, I got even more interested in the story as time went on, you know, living right down the road there, [name of church] He has a headstone there, but he's in the lake, but they did put they did put a headstone.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, okay.

Curt Dorsey: Okay, so I had some relatives that live about halfway halfway up farmville [?] road, and, you know, they were, they knew the story, they they had been-- my grandfather been there. And they actually had in the attic of their old house. They had a, it was a leather flat bench seat. And they told me that y'know that floated up from the plane. So they had-- I don't know whatever happened to them for that. But when I was a little kid, it was in the attic. And so I knew some stuff came up.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Curt Dorsey: Alright, so I bought the place about 1980. And I was teaching-- teaching school and whatnot. And after I retired from teaching school, I got a realtors license and then opened

my own company. And I was doing a listing for a lady. And she was gonna sell the house that she had let her grown so live in. He was supposedly going back to West Virginia, they were going to West Virginia or something. And while I'm there doing the listing, he casually mentions, "hey, you know, I've got that wheel off that plane that's in the lake."

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Okay.

Curt Dorsey: And I'm thinking I don't think so. But you know I'm diplomatic, I'm trying to make a living.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Curt Dorsey: So I go ahead and do my thing and get the listing and on his way out he said, Would you like to see that, that wheel? I said oh, yeah. So when out to a little building out back and he came out with the wheel? And I didn't really think it was it because it was only like, this tall-- I don't know if you seen the one--

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, yeah.

Curt Dorsey: Well I'm looking for one that's this tall. I didn't realize that the back landing gear are tall and the front landing gear is short. Anyway, so I started looking at it and had lots and lots of serial numbers on it had dates and had a date march 1944. I knew they were buildin' those planes as fast as they could build them and ship them out. And so he went down, June 8, '44. So the timeframe worked. You know, and them building them as fast as they could. So I asked him, did he want to donate it? He said, it should stay in Badin I said yeah it should, do you wanna donate it or do you wanna sell it. He said, Well, I need money, I'll sell it. So I gave him 20 bucks for it. And I bought it, called my friend David, someone who was very instrumental in the museum there and told him what the deal was and so I brought it down, and, you know, we all had a look at it. And then I just turned it over to David because he was more involved in the actual museum part. So as we did research, more and more it checked out. The story behind it was this guy's friend gave it to him. The friend's it was on, his friend's granddad, his little farmstead in Palestine, which is just [unclear] for being like 5 mi. The story was that it floated up his granddaddy worked on a bulldozer, y'know, clearing the-- keeping clear-- the tower lines. And so it was on the side of the lake as they picked it up and brought it home. And I think they actually used it on the farm quite a bit, because the rubber on the tire was really worn. And but the rubber the original rubber was there. The rims there, the landing gear.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, I was gonna ask about the landing gear itself.

Curt Dorsey: It was it was taken off. I think they took that off when they used it on the farm, they put it on a trailer or something. Anyway, so we got a hold of the, the front landing gear of the plane. And, you know, it's in the museum now. Growing up, I knew the story, supposedly. And I know you've already read the stuff on it. He was supposed to be a really good guy, smart guy, good guy. Not the kind of guy that had any strikes against him in life. And his job was to ferry the planes from Detroit to any whichever base they were sending them to. And he was, I think, taking this one to Cherry Point. And he hit a thunderstorm coming down. So he put down his Charlotte [I think?]. And he was so close and he got a ride home see his bride, you know, how that would be being newly married? Bein 45 miles from home. So he told them that he would circle a couple times before he headed out to Cherry Point and so he did.

Curt Dorsey: There was people that I knew in [unsure] older people. One gentleman named Mr. Dees who grew up there was like 12 years old at the time. And he said, you know, he solid heard the plane go over. He's just made one loop, he made I think he made two or three. Anyway, at that time, it would have been really unusual to see much of anything flying and really unusual to see a military plane kind of comin' over so low. And so they hear, he's out there in his field and

he heard the he actually heard the, the motor stutter out. I have this mock up made a friend of mine. You can see you can see the propwash and I-- he put in the smoke.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, that's pretty cool.

Curt Dorsey: Even the shadow on the water. And I took it at the location where the only two people that really saw it coming down. There was an old white guy and a young black girl and they were fishing. And so this is right behind is on farmstead. And I took the picture about the same date. I might've take mine, June 6 or 7 something like that, you know right there at the same time period.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. That's cool. Now, were they fishing together or in different boats?

Curt Dorsey: No, there weren't any boats back--

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Or they were fishing off the point.

Curt Dorsey: Back then during the war, you weren't allowed to put a boat on the lake. Matter of fact, if you if you notice, if you look at the museum up there, you'll see our police department. And it's got like 70 members in it, well they had police with machine guns on all the corners of the aluminum plant. And all of the [unclear] So we're well protected. And so...

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: So they would have been fishing from shore...

Curt Dorsey: They were fishing from the railroad tracks

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Railroad tracks, okay.

Curt Dorsey: And so they're supposedly the only two that really saw him comin down, I don't know that anybody actually saw it splash. If they did, you know, nobody made a big deal out of it. I know approximately where it is. I had a one time there was two contingents, one contingent wanted to pull plane up and the family basically did not. You've been down there long enough. They didn't think you needed to be just, they needed to be disturbed. So it wasn't done and but also, the plane is probably not anywhere near whole condition because the plane had a Norton bombsights. At the time, that was state of the art that was like national national security. They didn't even put one on a plane it unless it was guarded by-- it fitted with machine guns. And so when the government finally got to [palmerville?] they sent divers down the divers said it was, you know, there was an 80 to 100 ft. of water. The actual lake had not been in existence since, about like 1913, 14', and they didn't cut all of the trees on the steepest areas, so it was very hazardous and the lake was still extremely muddy. They told the locals that if they set off some percussion type things, some depth charges that it might make the plane come up. Well, in reality, they were blowing the plane up because they didn't want anybody to have access to the norton bombsight. So when they did that a few things did come up that front landing gear came up. I think the seat came up, I think a couple radio tubes came to the surface, plus a little bit of oil, and that kind of thing, came up. But that was the story. As I understand it. And so his mother was still alive, when I bought the farmstead they're puttin her in a nursin home, but she was still cognizant. And so though I never discussed the story with her. I don't think it was somethin you just bring up casually, "By the way..." Supposedly, his wife stayed single a while but eventually, you know, she was like a young young girl. I don't know what she was 16, 18. She was not an old, mature person, they didn't have any children. So she went ahead and later on, got married and had a full life and she's related to some other people that live-- the Hills who lived in Farmerville. And uh, one of them his name is Glenn Hill. He's still alive. He lives in Davidson. He comes here quite quite a bit every chance he gets. So, he may have some information that I'm not privy to. I can give you his phone number. But I mean, he would never I'll look the names of the primaries and probably the uncles and aunts and all that. So he married his childhood

sweetheart, who just lived up the road and down [unclear-- Cox?] road. She probably lived a mile most as the crow flies. So they'd known each other the whole life, going school together. So he married her.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: And her house was where was she living? Was she living in a house on Cox road?

Curt Dorsey: No, she was living with his mother on Farmerville road.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, that was the question, because I guess there was some folks saying like, she heard the splash or something like that.

Curt Dorsey: They were out in the field when it started coming down. They were out there doing theirs

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Right, wavin'

Curt Dorsey: Yeah.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Then it kind of was out of view.

Curt Dorsey: Yeah, they were looking forward to him flying over.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. So she would have probably, the whole family probably would have been standing out there and--

Curt Dorsey: Yeah, I mean and with the trees and everything and where it went down. You know, the plane kept going past, we call it Palmer mountains --Palmer island-- would be an island except there's a road going to it. They hadn't put the a road in, it would be an island, but it kept goin past those pines on the left there. And it probably splashed down in another three [unclear] at the lake. And probably six or seven hundred yards off the shore. Like said, supposed to be in 80 or 90 ft. of water. Actually, I had a guy rentin' one of my houses, and he was a hardhat diver and I was talkin' about the two contingencies. One wanted to take it out, one didn't? He claims that he went down after the family decided they didn't want it raised. He claims that he went down and found it and that he put a plaque on it. There's no way to prove it unless you go down and find the plaque, and nobody else was goin down.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. So, he rented a house from you when he was here doing that work.

Curt Dorsey: He lived for a couple of years, and it wasn't like they were here all the time. But he lived and [unclear] to work. He did get in with the contingency that wanted to raise the plane. I think there were some people who had raised a plane in South Carolina.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Okay, yes, yeah. I mean, there are groups that go around and raise planes to put them in museums and stuff like that.

Curt Dorsey: Yeah, I just don't think this one would have panned out. I think this one was too bad of shape for--

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Well, it sounds like, yeah, from your, you know, description, putting depth charges and stuff like that down is is definitely something that would just destroy it

Curt Dorsey: So important to the country it was considered. Secret agent stuff practically, and I don't know how good it was I've heard good things and bad things. But according to the government, it was, it was the thing.

Pat Smith: Didn't aluminum production during the war had been critical.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

Curt Dorsey: Well, this being an aluminum company, it had... If you work here, you kind of got a pass on, on being inducted because they were producing in a strategic manner that, you know, we needed all we could get. And so, you know, a whole lot of guys in town, volunteered, and were drafted with the service. There's a monument that they were the ones that died and whatnot,

but there were some that probably would have done if they hadn't been doing a vital job makin' a living.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Sure, sure. And now you when you had the wheel, you turned it over to the museum shortly thereafter.

Curt Dorsey: Yeah, I brought it there that same day, I brought it straight down. Because, you know, I didn't-- there wasn't any way I could immediately verify it, you know, I could look and see that it had the dates. And I can see that it had lots of serial numbers. I figured if it was right, it could be verified. And so I gave it to them, and some of those guys, and they started doing the research on it. And yeah, pretty, pretty conclusive. It was definitely off a B-25.

Pat Smith: And did that happen after Wendy Coe [sic?] would come down? I think that was what 99'? I think she was there.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah I think that wheel is probably only been it's only probably been 10 years, not 10 years. So the wheel was missing for about seven years.

Pat Smith: There's a reason I had asked that was I was thinking, we talked before, about, you know, if that wheel's out there, what else could be, could be out there?

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Well, there could be, I think like I said, there was that there was a flat leather bench seat in a bomber. That's probably what they would have had. I just have to have no idea what happened when the house was torn down. You know, if anybody knows what happened to it, nobody bothered to tell me about it. But I did see it on multiple occasions, as a young boy, probably 9 to 12 or 13. Actually spent a lot of time with my relatives there, in that house, you know, we played in the attic. It was you know it wasn't like, didn't live up there. But you can access it from the porch. So it was just an add on to the house, and it was definitely there. I mean, in my mind, it was the seat that came out of the plane.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Well, that's just kind of some of the stuff that we're doing here is just trying to collect local oral histories about the site itself and the memories, you know, and some of it secondhand, but that's awesome. Because that also helps us understand like, how the community continues to like, keep that story alive and pass it on to generations. So--

Curt Dorsey: Like I was telling you my-- I think it was my third-grade teacher actually told the story that that they were in school, and that there was it might have been recess time for all I know that you know the plane flew over and it was really low. And it went up the lake and it came down by the school and it made I'm sure it made at least two laps. It may have made three but it made a couple of laps before the engine sputtered out and my neighbor, his name was Ed [unclear], like I said he claims he was like 12 or 13. And for some reason he was actually on the farm or sitting in school that day.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Wow. That's cool. Is there anything else Pat that you can think of? Any other questions? We wrote a list of questions, just to prompt.

Pat Smith: Yeah, like we kind of covered like, if you thought it where would be a good place to look, if there could be artifacts sitting out in old tobacco barn or anything like that forgotten about maybe sort of like how the wheel turned up or the map of the [unclear].

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: If I had to guess, that was such a fluke. Like, probably about the same percentage of winning the lottery. I mean, it was just really, really, all put together the chances of me going for the listin', and him, still bein' there. And him-- the friend giving it to him, like I said, it just all lined up. Supposedly, after using it for years on the little farm in Palestine, that it was in a barn, and, y'know, the old man who found and used it, y'know, he died, the barns fallen down, and it's getting covered up in red mud when the grandson decides he'll dig it out. He heard the story, so he dug it out. And while how he decided to turn it over to this individual who

didn't really have that much of a connection to the town. The guy who found it that worked on the bulldozer. And he'd been a long dead by the time this story came around.

Pat Smith: I suppose if uh, cause I know when COBOL they did the mission that was at 99', 2000 with the Navy. I think that's probably about right. And but if, with the way he did gotten the technology or anything we're we're asked not to, to get a sense of if the Navy or their people associated, were comin back and say we want to positively ID where it's at, what would be your-

Curt Dorsey: Technically they still own it? If they come back and say they want it? It's not like we can keep it.

Pat Smith: But would you? How would you feel if they said we want to you know, kind of put a dot on this aircraft is and say we know exactly where this aircraft is in?

Curt Dorsey: That would be fine with me. You know, I'm sure somewhere here, up there. They're still records about the plane with the serial numbers. And I'm sure the government kept really good records. I don't know how easy it'd be to find all these things because they were pumping them out. They were making those planes quickly. That may have been the problem. They might have made that one a little bit too quickly.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. Yeah. And it certainly could have led to multiple crashes.

Pat Smith: Yeah, Yeah. Cause I was telling folks, during the research, I found out that the policy report these things would spontaneously catch on fire at one point. And they weren't supposed to. And they had a nickname for them too, I'm gonna have to look it up there was that they had. It was like kind of like screaming Mimi or something like that. It was it was a nickname like that. It might be the flaming Mimi. And but did you, do you have any like concerns about the any future risks to that resting place or the wreck site like, let's say 70 years from now or anything like that, or you think is pretty stable or safe?

Curt Dorsey: I think by now it's pretty stable. You know, if it landed, if some of the trees were still not totally cut down, and it was tangled in amongst the trees, those trees would've been down by now. You can still go out there when they pull the lake down. And you can find stuffs from [unclear] pine. [Unclear] pine is so rich that you know, it might have been 100 year old pine, it was this big, and the [unknown] pine was this big and it'll still be sticking up from the bottom of the [unknown], and you could cut a piece of it. It still smells, can still start a fire with it. So you know, there's been a lot of it sent down the river in the last 100 years. If it's on the bottom, I'm assuming that it's been pretty silted up. The divers claim that there were catfish down there as big as they were. I don't know. They pulled a 94 pound one out bout 10 years ago up there. I think anything bigger than that would break somebody's line anyway. Yeah, so you know it's a local legends it's a were still involved with.

PS I suppose like, what do you think of the current museum exhibits and Memorial Stone? Is there anything you'd like to see them do or have any ideas?

Curt Dorsey: I think they're doing a great job of what they're doing. I don't know that we need to make it anything bigger out of it than it is. Its a romantic tragedy, and it's a good story. Like a good ghost story. If you had a ghost telling at the lake with a pontoon [?]

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Well what we're gonna do with the, the interviews is just transcribe them. And then if you've got an email, we could send you a copy of the transcription. And then Pat would just be using it like in his thesis to tell the story and various viewpoints from community members. And we said that we could potentially make like a little online, like map and exhibit that has, you know, different locations that you can kind of go to and explore some of the story and places on maps. So that's kind of--

Curt Dorsey: They did a story on it a couple years ago. And it's in Our State Magazine, August edition. I thought they did a pretty good story.

PS And I just happen to think of it. I knew what they were talking about. I think that the lady's name was Miss Roosevelt was the the black lady that was fishing that saw it. And I was just thinking, what do you think? Do you suppose any of her relatives might still be living?

Curt Dorsey: That's a possibility. Well let's see, who could we call?

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, it'd be cool. I wonder if there's like a church or somebody associated.

Pat Smith: Yeah, cause I was just, it just occurred to me and I said, you know what, I wonder if someone's around for that, because, you know, she probably told them the story and all that.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: If you end up getting in touch with somebody you could always give Pat maybe Pat, Did you give him your phone number?

Curt Dorsey: There's a black lady that's on this town council. At the moment her name is eluding my brain, I know her, quite well. Yeah, she didn't know anything about the store. She may know something about the Roosevelts.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, that'd be awesome. Well, if yeah, like I said, if you find anything out, just give Pat a call because we'll be here for a couple of days. We'll leave on Wednesday, but then we'll probably come back later in the in the fall.

Curt Dorsey: So there is a headstone in the Palmerville Baptist Church that has his name on it.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Okay, cool. Yeah, we're gonna go we're trying to take photos of different places that were part of that history. And then the family's house. Do you mind sharing the location of the of the house?

Curt Dorsey: No, it's... go down Palmerville road one mile, there's a red barn with white trim. Straight across from that is my driveway. The driveway just before you get to my house, on the same side is the original house that I bought from his mom. I sold it. A lady named Kathy Taylor, lives there, but she's old and she won't know anything.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Oh, sure. Sure. Yeah. We're just putting kind of like dots on a map for you know...

Curt Dorsey: That's where that old house is. Okay, like I said it was 111 when I bought it. So its 140 now.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Wow. Wow. Oh, my goodness. That's cool. I love old houses.

Curt Dorsey: The thing about Badin, building the dams. It was, it was a Boomtown, kinda like Deadwood I mean Palmerville, which was a little village before it was ever thought of to put the dams in. It kind of blew up. People added a room to their house, so they could take in borders. They had a boardwalk. They had commissaries. They had stores. You had brothels. It had shootings and killings on Saturday night.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Oh my goodness.

Curt Dorsey: There's there's a graveyard up the lake called Graveyard Island. And if you went this train track out here you went up past that Palmer Island, the next little island on the right is like 200 acres and there's probably maybe 200 or more graves out there. A lot of them were were like pre-1860s but when somebody would die during that time, they didn't get very much of a marker, they just take-- they put them in the ground they might put flagstone marker not write anything on it so there's probably 100 or so just flagstone markers, no writing on them.

Curt Dorsey: Well, supposedly the guy that went down to the marker. I mean, they didn't put a real marker. You know, probably within 200 yards of where it is.

4 David Summerlin: Interview

14 September 2021

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: So we can get a good recording. Yeah. Alright, so I started recording and then we'll get you to fill out this form and just make sure it's okay. You know your information. And

David Summerlin: I thought I already filled one out, but maybe I hadn't

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: We'll wait. If you haven't, we'll get you. So basically, you know what we're doing. We're just trying to collect oral histories from anybody who was either alive at the time and has a memory associated with it, or somebody who's received second hand information.

David Summerlin: We'll say this was 1944, right?

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Uh huh. Yeah. So if you want tell us

David Summerlin: I was born in 1937

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: 1937

David Summerlin: So that makes me be about six years old don't it? Seven, six or seven. I was in the first or second grade, I reckon.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Okay. And then what was your recollection of what happened?

Unknown Speaker: All, I remember about it is our like said I was on my front porch. I lived on cedar Street,

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Cedar Street, Okay.

David Summerlin: Right here, Cedar Street second house on the left going up the hill.

Unknown Speaker: Uh huh.

David Summerlin: And like I told you a while ago, I was...had the mumps. I was at home.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Uh huh.

David Summerlin: And I was standing on the front porch when he flew over. And that's all I remember about it.

Unknown Speaker: Yeah. So do you. Do you recall anybody sort of being worried or concerned? No?

Unknown Speaker: I don't, I really don't. I know they They said they couldn't get it out. They found the boys. Got them out of it somehow. I don't know how they even did that.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

David Summerlin: And that's when I heard the other boy talking. Him, talking bout how they came up and started putting stuff in the jeep, I wondered if it wasn't some of that going on? Putting bodies in there?

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Oh..

David Summerlin: And some I don't know that but I'm just wondering. I still don't believe that the metal come up floating. I just don't believe that.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. So it might have been divers who were working.

David Summerlin: Now, Dale the boy that helps us, his daddy is one that found that tube that we got.

Unknown Speaker: Yeah.

David Summerlin: Radio Tube

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. And how did he find it? Was it floating?

David Summerlin: Floating on the lake

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Floating on the lake, okay

Unknown Speaker: Same way with that wheel we got. Well,

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: yeah.

Unknown Speaker: But ah that's all I really know about what took place out there. They might its a big, lake, you know, 175 ft. water is pretty deep. And like I said, all the trees was left in the bottom when they put when they built the dam and filled the lake. I swimmmed in it all my life fished in it and everything else. But I never

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. Never tried to find out more about

David Summerlin: I never tried to find out any more about that airplane.

Unknown Speaker: Yeah. Now, were when you were five. Do you recall it being strange that an aircraft was flying over or

David Summerlin: When I was at home?

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Six when you were sick? Yeah. Being home or being recalled? .

Unknown Speaker: I don't. I'm not sure I just I don't know. Course back then it was war time on know.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Right. Do you one of the things that we have been hearing from other folks is, you know, they have sort of second hand knowledge of things, you know, information that's been sort of floating around, do you know, of any other artifacts or pieces that might be in private hands, or people who might know of anything.

David Summerlin: The stuff I got in the museum here was given to me and I was It's been so long course now, I'm losing my memory. I know that, but, but um not counting, what information we got there is all there. I just don't remember the things went on back then.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: And how long have you so you've lived in Baden

David Summerlin: My daddy brought me to Baden in 1941.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: 1941?

David Summerlin: Right he went to work for ALCOA then.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Okay. All right.

David Summerlin: He had a brother who lived here and his brother was on police force. And his brother talked him into coming to Baden to go to work that's when they was hiring. So he went to work for em in 1941 then I want to work for about 1957. I didn't get to work long till they decided, they was gonna tear it down and build another one. So they laid me off, and course, I got married then, and went into the Air Force, stayed near for four years, came back out of the Air Force. My wife is from Burlington, and we wound up in Burlington because I couldn't get back on here they had it tore down, rebuilding. So I went to work for Canon Mills a while and then I worked for Guilford Dairy there in Burlington awhile too. Before I came back to Baden after 10 years and they added me back.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Okay, so what was your job when you, when you were working and came back?

Unknown Speaker: Well then when I came back here, and went back to work, they hired me to cut hedges Baden had hedges everywhere. All around the streets, town, buildings, everything had hedges, so I cut hedges And wasn't long after that, of course, it was a union operated shop. And I was a member of the Union. And when they put up another job, I bid on it to get out of that hedge cuttin'. So I finally got a job in the maintenance department. And I wound up mill right in the maintenace. I did millwright work for a long time. Went to a apprentice school and got some training and all that. And then they made me a supervisor later. I was maintenace supervisor. When I retired I was with them for 30 years,

David Summerlin: did they Okay, 30 years. Wow. Did they pay for your training? or? Oh yeah, when you belong to the union, in town. Yeah, they sent me to school.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: That's nice. And then what was your dad's job when he must then or
Unknown Speaker: when he first went into plant he worked in pot room area, what they called it a rod room. I can show you if I was sitting around one.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

David Summerlin: Around one of those things. But anyway, he roded carbon into pots. Then he, he later changed jobs too, he became a supervisor. He was in what they call the ingot plant. That's one of the metal Yeah. And when they are about through finishing the metal, he poured it up on a mold and they shipped it out. He was a supervisor.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Okay, so you're both ended up a supervisor.

David Summerlin: (laughs) Yea! Anyway, it was a good place to work. Never had no problems. with ALCOA.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Well, and union is nice to be supported and that you could be in in union.

Unknown Speaker: Yeah the union was alright. They had some bad names, but they did most good stuff.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. That's good.

David Summerlin: Got good wages for everybody anyway.

Unknown Speaker: Now you have been instrumental in the museum and the development of the museum. museum.

David Summerlin: Well, I pretty much started the musuem

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: (Laughing) Yeah, I figured as much.

David Summerlin: Well, I believe I told you this already. Jerry Hall who y'all been trying to get up with? Jerry and I collected memorabilia of all kinds, mostly country store stuff, adverto... advertising. I mean, we've dealt in it for years. We did flea markets all up and down the east coast. And at the same time, we collected anything Stanly County, this county, any Stanley county memorabilia, we collected it and stuck it in my building out the house. And, and when and the problem that we got Badin stuff all this maintenance stuff.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Sure.

David Summerlin: So, we finally got so much stuff I told Jerry what we need to do some with some of it. So, we decided to put all the Baden stuff in a museum. That's when I went looking for a building and Alcoa gave me that building there (pointing to the main museum building).

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Oh, yeah, This one. Okay.

David Summerlin: That was the first building they had. That was the kindergarten building. When it was built. ALCOA built it as a kindergarten, and it was up on the next corner, the kindergarten. And then after it was a kindergarten, it just became a community building. When I was growing up thats what it was, we used it for school dances and meetings and different clubs met in there, all kind of things. Thats what that building was used for. But so, when they decided to give me that building, I was tickled to get it, moved it down here and put all that Jerry and I had in that building. And just I hadn't told it over these years. There again, I'm losing my memory, but I think it was about 98, 99 somewhere in there, and we did that. Then this firetruck was in the fire department, that was the only truck they'd ever had. Well, that's a 1937 truck.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

David Summerlin: And they decided they were going to get rid of old and get them a new truck. And we're gonna get rid of that '37 and I didn't wanna see it leave Baden and nobody else did. So

they let me have it and I built this building or had this building built. I didn't build it. I had it built.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

David Summerlin: And put that truck in here. Well, got the truck, and I started adding all this other stuff (laughs).

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. It keeps going that way.

David Summerlin: A lot of stuff.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah I bet.

David Summerlin: Well, and then that apartment also came available. And we want to have one of those. So we bought that one and we've restored it back to the 1913 period. So we're tickled with that.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah!

David Summerlin: I bought this lot here, beside of us, I've always wanted to have a Hardaway Museum. But I hadn't gotten around to build another building on it, moneys....

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

David Summerlin: Gotta have money.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, absolutely. Well, you've put in a lot for the community and turned it on.

Unknown Speaker: Well, I've had a lot of good. don't get me wrong now. Jerry's done a lot. If you meet Jerry, I hope he comes on up here and I thought he told you something he wanted to come in the morning or so.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Oh, okay.

David Summerlin: I heard that a while ago. I think somebody told me that. All right. But Jerry's quite a collector too. He's

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah,

David Summerlin: He's big in Coca Cola. He has one of the biggest Coca Cola collections in the country. And he's always he's still doing it. I don't do much running around anymore. I'm getting too old to mess with it.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: well, you've got a nice place to hang out. Oh, yeah.

David Summerlin:

ALCOA has been good to me too, in a lot of ways.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. Yeah.

David Summerlin: No doubt.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: That's good.

David Summerlin: My wife has been good to me. She's a nurse. She went to nurse's training over in Charlotte. Presbyterian.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Where did she work?

David Summerlin: Well, she worked in a lot of places.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah.

David Summerlin: 11:50

Course I was out in Louisiana when I was an Air Force, and she worked out there for doctors' offices. Then come to Burlington, she's worked up there for a doctor. Then when we came back here, she wound up working in the hospital and for doctors. So, she's moved around quite a bit. But she's like me, she's quit now. And she. She's 84 and I'm 84.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Okay. Prime of your life! That's awesome! You got anything that you can think of?

Patrick Smith: Well, I guess we've kind of covered. Are there any other kind of exhibits or memorials you'd like to see for? McDaniel or Winslow?

David Summerlin: Well, I wouldn't be against anything that comes out of this. But I just can't imagine them getting that plane out of that lake, I don't, I don't see any need for it. But yeah, that's a lot of money spent for something that I don't believe would be worth it.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah. Well, maybe some possible, you know, images of it. I guess, sonar that can give a good image because I guess there seems to be a lot of community question about whether it's fully intact or partially intact or was exploded, you know, and so just having an image of it would be great to

David Summerlin: Well, most of what people are telling is hearsay stuff. I think. They don't really know none of them for sure what's happened to that thing.

Unknown Speaker: So, if we could find it, you know, using like a sonar or something like that, you know, getting an image would at least give some closure as to now you know, where it's at? You know,

Unknown Speaker: I was I just I can't help but believe that as much of it is around here no one brought anything. I would have heard about it, or somebody would have brought it to me.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Yeah, cause you're the guy. Right?

David Summerlin: Right! They would have gave some of it, given me some of it.

Unknown Speaker: If anybody was going to be contacted it would be you. You're the one that has the interest in the history of the area.

David Summerlin: that's what, what keeps me puzzled. I don't know. Yeah.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: I mean, also kind of strange thing for me, too. Yeah. I've

Patrick Smith: I've wondered if it's the case that there's a lot of like, the idea we were talking before. There's old barns or some old van and sitting in the attic, or in some weird spot. Yeah, it's been forgotten about.

Unknown Speaker: Exactly. Somebody put a piece of it somewhere. And then you don't remember.

Unknown Speaker: it is hard to believe that there is, but like I said, I knew everybody in Baden at one time, which I don't now. A lot of Baden population has changed quite a bit over the last 10 years. But in my growing up days, I knew everybody. And then when I was in high school, I worked in the grocery store. And like I said I knew everybody. It just didn't matter. If you came into Badin, I knew you (laughs).

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: 14:48

That's pretty funny. Yeah. What else? Anything else?

Patrick Smith: No, I really, I think that the only thing I could think of was because. As you would you'd seen, I go back to aircraft, you'd see it fly overhead but yeah, do you remember anybody suddenly just running out of their houses and

Unknown Speaker: No, I do not. I mean, that was really not a rare thing for a plane to fly over here. Right? Yeah. In another time. It might have been more rare so but yeah, people don't think about things like that

Unknown Speaker: was your mom home with you when you had the mumps? Do you remember who?

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: was with you?

David Summerlin: My mother, yes.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Now, did you have brothers and sisters?

David Summerlin: I have two half-brothers. My mother was married twice. Yea I had two half-brothers, but they didn't live here. They didn't live, they lived in Greensboro and they winded up in Florida. That's where they was at when they passed on.

Unknown Speaker: As long as we talking about Badin or the aircraft, I know about that the rest is far from my mind.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Well, I'll give you this form that we're just getting as a release to say that we've recorded you know, if you don't mind your signing and dating they're good. And then we'll have that go on record and what we've been telling everybody is we will transcribe that the interview and have the document we'll send the document here to the museum and you can have a copy of it and then and then we would just use it in you know, perhaps master's thesis and any kind of you know, promotional or educational things that we do for with the museum so

Patrick Smith: Thanks so much. Do you know about if when they were, they did the recovery there but well they were trying to do recovery of the aircraft do was it was ALCOA involved at all do you think with what the Navy was doing?

David Summerlin: If anything went on out there (pointing to Badin Lake) ALCOA had to be involved Yeah. Cause ALCOA looked after that lake and dams you just didn't do nothing round here with ALCOA wasn't involved you can bet, they had something to do with something Yeah. Now what I don't know but I'll guarantee you they had something to do with something, what I wouldn't know.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: that's would there be any records of ALCOA being.

Unknown Speaker: Well, there now over there again now ALCOA when they left they give us all these records you see, biochemists and them they gave us a lot of stuff we've never found nothing but we say we haven't sit and gone through all these cabinets see over there it says ALCOA files

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Would it be okay if we looked through?

David Summerlin: Well I don't care, like I've said, I've not gone through them. It's very possible we got something we don't know about but I can't I don't know why they would have had anything to keep records of on it but they might have I don't know

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Any kind of log of safety.

Patrick Smith: you know safety report or safety log because you thi.. you think I was thinking about that, but you know they because this is their their land and nothing moves without them knowing about it. Because maybe if the Navy came to them and said hey, is it feasible if we let the dam loose for a little bit what?

David Summerlin: Well, I'm sure they had to do something with ALCOA now, there ain't no question. Now. I don't know how that was back in them days. Day what (referring to form)

Patrick Smith: It is the....? Yep. Is 14th Yes, sir. All right. Do you have an email you want to put down?

David Summerlin: I don't have email.

Patrick Smith: Okay.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: We can Yeah, that's fine. Okay, well, I appreciate you taking the time to do this with us. It's nice to get you know firsthand accounts.

David Summerlin: Sure.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: And you were a child it's nice to add that to the mix of you know, everything that you remember. So, it kind of helps piece it together.

David Summerlin: I don't know that you'll find things in that their files.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: up for possible dates. You know if we can get an A date range, you never know. Obviously, we would. But yeah,

David Summerlin: everything went to our ALCOA. They owned everything to start with. Owned all the houses.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: right.

David Summerlin: Well, they owned some of the store buildings and things they got built as they grew but ALCOA didn't own those, but they actually had to get the land from ALCOA. because they owned it.

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: Right, right. It's kind of like that old country song. The company store. What?

Patrick Smith: Company store yea (laughing)

Dr. Jennifer McKinnon: I don't want too exactly. All right, well, I will press stop.

APPENDIX D: BRIGADIER GENERAL GENTRY BOSWELL'S CRASH ANALYSIS

Preliminary analysis of PBJ-1 89050 Crash

This analysis is based on the data included in the original U.S. Navy reports, the Coble Research Paper, and further research to clarify aircraft characteristics of the PBJ-1 and the geography in the local area of the crash. Analysis is characterized into two categories; first, that of known or established fact and second, conclusions based on data provided and forensic analysis with the preponderance of evidence as the standard per aviation accident investigation methodology.

PBJ-1 crashed on 8 July 1944 in Badin Lake NC on a delivery mission from Columbus Ohio to MCAS Cherry Point for assignment to an operational squadron. The pilot, 2nd Lt Charles McDaniel was an inexperienced pilot with 489.4 total hours of total flight time. The copilot, Ens JG John Withrow's flight time is not reflected in the original Navy reports due to the fact that the PBJ-1H model had a single-pilot cockpit design with a singular set of primary aircraft controls. The copilot in the H-model sits behind the pilot and is used as an augmentee for pilot duties.

The aircraft departed Morris Field in Charlotte NC at 1223L on 8 June. Based on the flight plan and distance to MCAS Cherry Point I assume the aircraft departed with a full load of fuel for the flight which is noteworthy since it would negatively impact aircraft handling characteristics at low altitude/high speed.

The pilot diverted north off the most direct route in a coordinated plan to fly over his hometown and respective family/in-laws in Palmerville, NC. Eyewitness testimony correlates the aircraft departed from the flight planned route and approached Palmerville from the southwest (heading ~045) passing over the town of Albemarle at an altitude and power setting sufficient to shake windows in that town. As a native of the local area, McDaniel likely used NC State Hwy 740 as the primary visual reference to navigate to Badin Lake and then used the lake as the primary visual reference for the planned flyover. The aircraft approached the lake from the southwest making the same audible signature on the ALCOA plant. Once over Badin Lake McDaniel entered a left-hand turn to the north side of Palmer Mountain circling the town of Palmerville twice.

The aircraft was at an extremely low altitude (<250ft). This conclusion is based on the eyewitness accounts and the fact that the family could not see the aircraft while it was over the lake due to the obstruction from Palmer Mountain which is 673ft MSL, only slightly higher than Badin Lake at 505ft MSL. Based on terrain, if the aircraft were higher than 250ft it would have been visible to the family during the entire turning route. On the third turn over the lake the aircraft crashed in a turn with the inboard wing impacting the water in a banking turn.

The following is established under the preponderance of evidence standard. The pilot was flying less than 250ft AGL for the third and final planned pass over his family. The approximate military thrust speed for a PBJ-1H at that altitude would be 250mph. Based on the geography of the lake and the family's location the aircraft would have had to achieve a bank of 35-45 degrees to fly between the two points at that speed. Based on eyewitness accounts and the wreckage it would have cartwheeled on impact after the inboard wing impacted the water. The key indication for this conclusion is the momentary engine sputter heard just before the explosion of the crash impact. The momentary engine sputter noted by the witnesses would have been the knifing impact of the inboard engine in the water just prior to the main impact of the rest of the aircraft. The engines on the PBJ-1 are on the inner third of the wings and would have likely separated from the aircraft fuselage in the initial impact at two points. First, along the outboard line of the respective engine mounts and secondarily along the fuselage fitting. The PBJ-1 has a

tandem tail boom which separated at the aft bulkhead in the impact and remained above the surface of the lake floating for approximately 10 minutes before it sank. Based on the turn and bank angle of the aircraft the crash impact would be characterized as high-speed/low angle with an impact angle of approximately 25 degrees below level flight. This correlates with the eyewitness accounts of the initial crash, the wreckage and debris on the lake and the portion of the wing recovered on shore and eventually ceded to the EDU.

The cockpit design of the PBJ-1 as previously referenced is significantly different from the parent model B-25 as the PBJ-1 has a single set of aircraft controls and pilot seat on the left side of the cockpit. The copilot in the PBJ-1 sat behind the pilot and did not have any primary or secondary aircraft controls.

Based on the aircraft crash geometry and the EDU salvage report it is safe to assume that the bodies of the pilot and copilot departed the cockpit during the crash. The PBJ-1 pilot's seat was a double-bucket metal seat with a 4-point restraint harness (lap belt and shoulder restraints on an inertial reel). It is common in aircraft accidents such as this to have the pilot's body remain strapped in the seat and the cumulative mass of the seat and pilot ejected from a crash due to impact forces. In this particular crash the cartwheel that followed the wing impact would have likely ruptured the nose section of the fuselage and the pilot was likely ejected from the aircraft through the left side of the fuselage with the seat frame. Crash forces and subsequent departure from the fuselage would have induced significant injuries to the extremities and is the likely source of the large patch of skin found in the initial response. The body and seat would have sunk to the bottom of the reservoir along the primary line of the crash vector and based on mass and frontal area would likely be within 50 meters of the initial location of the fuselage.

The copilot was seated behind the pilot just past the forward bulkhead facing the port engine/left side. The copilot seat was a half-bucket with the same frame and restraint system as the pilot. In this case the crash forces would have forced the copilot seat through the forward bulkhead and would have likely separated from the aircraft in the same manner as the pilot along the crash vector.

There are several things to consider when postulating on the disposition of the remains of the pilot and copilot. First, the water temperatures at the bottom of the lake would significantly slow the process of decomposition. The average water temperature at the depth in the vicinity of the crash would be at or below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Second, the liberation of the bodies and seats from the fuselage would have done tremendous damage to the limbs and torso which would have prevented decomposing gases from providing positive buoyancy to the remains. Last, the four point harnesses likely held the bodies in place in the seats post-impact and retained the largest portion of the torso and pelvic girdle intact in each respective seat.

Debris Field Analysis

The survey results of Coble's research established the location of the fuselage and tail sections of the aircraft as well as the engines. ROV dive equipment could summarily re-establish the location of the largest debris elements such as the fuselage, tail, and engines. Furthermore, the grouping of five anomalies detected at the wreckage site in the initial magnetometer survey likely contain the location of the pilot and copilot seats which would still contain human remains. Other debris in that grouping would be some of the .50 caliber machine guns mounted in the nose. A secondary survey with correlated magnetometer and side scan sonar has a high degree of probability to locate and further define the crash site and human remains.

The survey indicates the rear of the debris field is located at the tail section with the remaining wreckage in between it and the engines at the furthest point of the debris field along the crash vector.

APPENDIX E: AIRCRAFT TROUBLE REPORT

N. Aer. 339
(Revised Apr. 1942)

AIRCRAFT TROUBLE REPORT

(See BuAero Circular Letter No. 24-41 for detailed instructions in making out this Report)

Unit to which aircraft assigned... On Ferry Transfer to MCAS, Cherry Point, N. C. A. T. R. Serial No. 8-44
The Trouble Board met (place) CHERRY POINT, N. C.; (date) 10 JUNE 1944; and found the following to be true:
Accident (place) BADIN, N. C.; (date) 8 JUNE 1944 (hour) 1300
Time in flight until occurrence of accident (hrs. and min.) Purpose of flight: Ferrying New Aircraft

	AIRCRAFT	R. ENGINE	L. ENGINE	ENGINE	ENGINE
Model	PBJ-1	R-2600-29	R-2600-29		
Bureau number	89050	43-24966	43-23657		
Manufacturer's number	98-21884				
Acceptance date (new)	1 JUNE 1944				
Operating time, total	UNKNOWN				
Operating time since last overhaul					
Date of last overhaul					
Number of last overhaul					
Place of last overhaul	No Overhaul	No Overhaul	No Overhaul		

List personnel: Briefly describe all injuries, but however minor, sustained from accident.
Pilot: CHARLES McDANIEL (DEAD)
2nd Lt. USMCR (DEAD)
Hours this model last 3 months: 128.4
Total flying time: 489.4
Copilot: JOHN E. WITHEROW
Ensign AY(N) USNR. (DEAD)

CLASSIFICATION OF ACCIDENT

(NOTE—Fill in this classification with pen and ink—do not use typewriter.)

NATURE ☒ X
RESULTING
Personnel (class) AA
Material (class) A

IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF ACCIDENT

%	PER-SON-NEL	ERRORS OF PILOT	ERRORS OF OTHER PERSONNEL	POWER PLANT FAIL-URE	STRUC-TURAL FAIL-URE	MIS-CELL-ANEOUS
		Error of judgment Poor technique Disobedience of orders Carelessness or negligence Miscellaneous		Fuel system Cooling system Ignition system Lubrication system Engine structure Propeller and propeller accessories Engine control system Miscellaneous Undetermined Flight control system Movable surfaces	Stabilizing surfaces, struts, and wires Wings, struts, and wires Landing gear, struts, and wires Wheels, tires, and brakes Seaplane float or boat, struts, and wires Fuselage, engine mount, and fittings Cowling and fairing Tail wheel assembly Arresting appliances on aircraft Miscellaneous Undetermined	Weather Darkness and low visibility Airport, terrain, or sea Other

UNDERLYING CAUSES OF ACCIDENT

ERRORS OF PILOT										MATERIAL FAILURES									
Lack of experience		Physical and psychological				Inspection		Maintenance		Design		Other							
General	Special	Discipline or defect	Post-mortem	General	Special	Discipline or defect	Post-mortem	Original	Discipline	Discipline	Discipline	Discipline	Discipline						
Total	Recent	Recent	Inherent	Temporary	Inherent	Temporary	Operating	Maintenance	Manufacturing	Original	Maintenance	Indefinite	Discipline						
X																			

While ferrying new aircraft to MCAS, Cherry Point, plane cleared for Cherry Point, N.C. from Charlotte, N. C. While enroute circled Badin, N. C. at low altitude, proceeded over reservoir at low altitude, attempted turn, dipped wing in water, crashed and sank in 150 feet of water.

(OVER)

1944 JUN 16 PM 1 48

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Steps taken or recommended to correct trouble reported on aircraft and/or engine forming subject of this report. In case of failure of material, does the evidence indicate the failure to be of a general nature, rendering a redesign desirable or necessary for aircraft and/or engines of the same model?—If so, have reinforcements or changes been made locally?—Does the Trouble Board recommend further investigation and action by the Bureau and the contractor, affecting redesign and procurement?

[illegible]

Recommended disposition of serviceable and unserviceable material, this aircraft and/or engine (check appropriate square(s) using pen)

7015 Jt(a). Turn into overhaul base for examination and further recommendation.

1007.4(b) Replace or repair damaged part(s)—survey or scrap unserviceable material

(c) Major overhaul or survey or scrap unserviceable material.

(d) Strike—salvage serviceable material for stock or store. Scrap unserviceable material.

Remarks and further recommendations (including remarks as to the effect of this trouble on operations):

DISTRIBUTION—(check and fill in with pen and ink if desired): 5 ENCLOSURES—(check and fill in with pen if desired)

5 (a) Original—to Bureau of Aeronautics via In-
..... Command for comment.

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(e) 1: Copy aircraft log (if aircraft affected).

(N) d. Copy—engine log (if engine affected):

(c) 1. Copy.—file. 11/1/58

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1-1 Copy D of A. Hooters USMC.

1 Copy Desk, File BuAero.

1. Copy Disposition Yard.

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(206 Bureau Circular Letter No. 57-31 for detached mail 10-10260-1 in marking out this label)

VIRGINIA LICENSING BOARD

APPENDIX F: AIRCRAFT TROUBLE ANALYSIS CARD FOR PBJ-1-H-89050

YEARS MONTH DAY 8 June 1944 1300		PILOT'S NAME HOURS FLYING EXPERIENCE LOCATION Iadkin River reservoir nr. Badin, N.C.	
FLYING EXPERIENCE 4-1 1.921 NAME AND RANK OF PILOT MC DANIEL, Charlie, Lt. 2nd.		PURPOSE OF FLIGHT Ferry from Columbus, O. to Cherry Point	
SERVICE AND GROUP USNR ORGANIZATION VRF-2		FLYING OR LANDING CONDITIONS No factor	
DATE OF PILOT RATING FLYING EXPERIENCE (YEARS) 138.4 489.4		ANALYSIS 1. After takeoff, wing dipped in water. Flat battery.	
PREVIOUS ACCIDENT RECORD Fatal		Pilot flying low over water, made turn and dipped wing. Aircraft crashed in reservoir and sank.	
NAME AND RANK OF OTHER PERSONNEL WITHROW, John E., Ensign, AVN-USNR COPILOT			
AIRCRAFT CLASS VPB MODEL AND NUMBER PBJ-1 #69050			
REMARKS Plane resting in 150' of water.			
NATURE OF ACCIDENT 100% PE (100% disturbance of engine)			
U.S. NAVY BUREAU OF AERONAUTICS AIRCRAFT TROUBLE ANALYSIS FORM 8, SEP. 1939			

