



Part 9 - Peculiar Phenomenon:

Early United States Efforts to Collect and Analyze Flying Discs

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*One of the many unanswered questions is how long was there
an American military order to shoot down the discs described
as 'enemy weapon systems?'" - J. Andrew Kissner*

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Trouble All Over the World

The most controversial research finding will undoubtedly generate argument from both proponents and skeptics of the flying disc phenomenon. But it appears that flying discs very possibly behaved aggressively in 1947. It's also possible there was aggression before that year, but certainly after the May 29 detonation in Juarez, Mexico, and second explosion near Mt. Franklin in New Mexico.

This possibly explains one reason why the U. S. government will not admit that UFOs and their occupants exist. Aerial events reported and explained away as the result of "natural causes" do not appear to have been "natural" in any respect. Have you ever wondered why in all of the instances that military units have been observed in association with this phenomena, no report has mentioned that military personnel shot at the objects? This author believes we definitely did in the summer of 1947. One of the many unanswered questions is how long was there an American military order to shoot down the discs described as "enemy weapon systems?"

A lengthy series of mysterious and unexplainable civil and military air disasters occurred after the May 29, 1947, Juarez incident. My research in several local and national newspapers from that time period show that more than sixty U. S. Army and Navy aircraft - B-29s, B-17s, Corsairs, P-80s, P-84s, AT-6s, P-51s, C-47s, F-7s - were lost over a two month period beginning on May 29, 1947. One hundred twenty Army and Navy airmen were killed and 74 others injured in these incidents. Most of those airplane accidents occurred over the continental United States.

By June 15, 1947, President Harry Truman commissioned a blue ribbon panel of experts headed by Civil Aeronautics Board Chairman, James Landis and Dr. Jerome Hunsaker (MJ-7), Chairman of the National Advisory Committee on Aeronautics (NASA) to investigate.

On May 29, 1947, at La Guardia Field, New York, at 8:10 p.m. EST, a United Airlines DC-4 used all of the runway to take off, but failed to gain altitude, flipped over and exploded at the end of the runway. Thirty-eight people died. It was the largest commercial airline disaster in U. S. history at that time. [*The New York Times*, May 30, 1947.]

In the *NYT's* article, an assistant New York district attorney who interviewed the injured pilot at the hospital reported: "He said that he tried to get it off the ground, but nothing happened. The plane continued on through a wire fence and across a highway and crashed into a ravine. The next thing he knew, there were flames all around him."

Further, a reporter at the scene said: "Flames shot fifty feet or more into the air, forming a torch that could be seen for miles. The heat from the burning gasoline in the big plane's tanks was so intense that would-be rescuers on the scene ... could not help with their handheld fire extinguishers."

A subsequent Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) investigation concluded that as the pilot was taking off and approaching 100 miles per hour:

- the aircraft's engines were operating normally
- the flight controls were free
- all systems on the plane were functioning
- but the airliner did not develop enough lift to gain altitude

As the airplane neared the end of the runway, the pilot ordered the first officer to cut all power while the pilot applied the brakes, but could not stop suddenly enough. The Vice President of Operations for United Airlines said:

"A study of weather conditions which prevailed at the time indicates the probable cause of the accident was a wind shift (change in the direction of the wind) of almost unbelievable suddenness, which changed from the south blowing at 19 mph only a few minutes before takeoff to a northwest wind blowing at 23 mph.

"It is believed that a freak gust of wind, slightly in advance of an approaching squall line, was responsible for the accident. To my knowledge, this has never happened before to a plane of this type; or, in fact, to any large transport plane. Take-off accidents in themselves are extremely rare. This particular type in a transport is unheard of." [Ibid.]

Less than twenty hours later on May 30, 1947, an Eastern Airlines DC-4 flying above Aberdeen Proving Ground (another U. S. Army Ordnance/OSRD test site) at Port Deposit, Maryland, crashed. Fifty-four passengers and crew members died. According to eyewitnesses, the airliner: "...fell apart in the air and nosedived into the ground," exploding on impact. That second crash then became the worst U. S. commercial airline disaster at the time.

PLANE CRASH KILLS 38, INJURES 10 IN TAKE-OFF AT LA GUARDIA FIELD. PASSENGERS TRAPPED BY FLAME

FIRE BARS RESCUE

**All Living Thrown Clear
as DC-4 Goes Down
in Muddy Creek**

CHIEF PILOT A SURVIVOR

**Some of Those in Hospital
in Critical Condition—No
Cause Yet Determined**

Marking the worst disaster in the history of this country's commercial aviation, a huge four-engine United Airlines plane, with forty-four passengers and crew of four crashed and burst into flames at 8:10 o'clock last night just after it had taken off from La Guardia field on a scheduled non-stop flight to Cleveland.

Thirty-eight of those aboard were burned to death. Ten others were taken to various hospitals in Queens, some of them in such critical condition that there were grave fears about their survival.

The plane, a DC-4, flying westward for the week-end Decoration Day stoppage of weekday activity, took off in the rainstorm that struck the metropolitan area. It was scheduled originally to leave La Guardia at 7:40 P. M. but was delayed until 7:55 P. M.

After getting the "go" signal, the chief pilot, Benton B. Baldwin, 38 years old, of 31-23 Eighty-third Street, Jackson Heights, Queens, one of the few survivors, took his position at the far end of Number Eighteen Runway, which is 1,600 feet long and at the south end of the field. He went through the usual routine of warming up his engines and checking his emergency gauges and then started.

Heat Keeps Back Rescuers

He cleared the runway and started climbing. He had just got away from the field when the crash occurred. The plane hurtled into a marshy creek between Ditmars Boulevard and Grand Central Parkway. Flames shot fifty feet or more into the air, forming a torch that was seen for many miles. The heat from the burning gasoline in the big plane's tanks was so intense that would-be rescuers, on the scene before the arrival of fire crews and police emergency squads, could not help with their inadequate hand extinguishers.

One theory about the crash, which later evidence seemed to support, was that "immediately after getting off the ground the pilot, while still waiting to gain altitude, had not started his retractable landing wheels. It was believed the wheels hit the fence, a 100-foot section of which was cut away, and then rammed the landing gear.

Separate investigations were started immediately by the Fire Department, on orders of Commissioner Frank J. Quoy; the Police Department, on orders of Chief Inspector Martin J. Brown, and by officials of the Corporation Counsel's office.

Pilot Tells of Crash

A little after 11 o'clock last night Victor Levin, Assistant District Attorney of Queens County, who interviewed Mr. Baldwin at Queens General Hospital, issued the following statement:

"He (Mr. Baldwin) took off with a capacity overall load of 40,000 pounds on Runway 18, which he states is the shortest runway in the field. The plane should rise to from 2,500 to 3,000 feet.

"He said he tried to get it off the ground but nothing happened. The plane continued through a

Fire, Mud and Rain Impede Rescue Crews at the Disaster

Working in the glare of huge searchlights set up by the Police and Fire Departments, rescuers trudged through thick mud and pelting rain last night to reach passengers inside the DC-4 plane that crashed and burned near La Guardia field.

The plane, its forward part a mass of crumpled metal, its giant wings sheared off its fuselage and lying within one, came down in a mud-filled depression near one of the field's service roads. The spot is about fifty feet west of the School of Aeronautics and within sight of Ditmars Boulevard.

So intense was the fire—fed by spurting gasoline—that the field's fire-fighting equipment could not approach the wreckage for ten or fifteen minutes. And even after the fire-fighters had smothered much of the flames with chemicals, it was some time before the white-hot skin of the ship's fuselage had cooled sufficiently for the rescue workers to poke tentatively into the wreckage.

As the bodies were taken out they were placed on stretchers in the rain and covered by the law-ender-colored blankets the plane carried for passenger comfort at high altitudes. At 8:15 o'clock about thirty bodies had been removed and lay in rows on the stretchers of policemen and firemen attempted to make an accurate account of the fatalities and to identify them.

By 10:30 o'clock thirty-seven bodies had been removed and taken to a makeshift morgue in the basement cafeteria of the nearby aeronautics school where the work of identifying went on. Most of those who perished in the crash were badly burned, their clothes saved from their bodies.

Early today the police began to remove the bodies from the school to the morgue at the Queens General Hospital, 164th Street and Grand Central Parkway, Jamaica, and relative and friends of the

Continued on Page 2, Column 7

Wild V-2 Rocket 'Invades' Mexico; Backtracks in a White Sands Test

By HANSON W. BALDWIN
Special to The New York Times
PORT BLISS, N. Mex., Tel., but V-2's mechanical difficulties May 29—A wild German V-2 postponed the firing until 4 P. M.

Front page, The New York Times, May 30, 1947.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MAY 31, 1947

53 KILLED AS AIRLINER CRASHES AND BURNS IN MARYLAND WOODS; DISASTER HERE LAID TO WIND SHIFT

Hunt Doctor-Flier Lost Near Buffalo

By The Associated Press
BUFFALO, N. Y., May 30.—Twenty airplanes scoured southwestern New York fruitlessly today for some trace of a Chicago physician missing since Sunday on the second leg of a flight from Massachusetts to Chicago in his private plane.

Dr. Robert T. Wheeler left Rochester about 5 P. M. Sunday after visiting and has not been heard from since. He was flying a single-engine Stearman Vought, according to state police in Westfield.

The only clue thus far, state police said, was a report from Springfield Airport, thirty miles south of Buffalo, that an unidentified plane flew over the port town, after Dr. Wheeler left Rochester.

Capt. Adrian Block Jr. of the Civil Air Patrol said that today's flights, in which sixteen CAP planes, two Army reconnaissance planes and two private aircraft took part, was unsuccessful, but added that the search would be continued.

SENATORS PRESENT MOBILIZATION PLAN

Seven Republicans Outline 10-Point Defense Program for Action by Congress

By The Associated Press
WASHINGTON, May 30.—Seven Republicans today presented a ten-point mobilization plan to the House of Representatives.

PLANE NOT IN AIR

Pilot Tried to Halt His Take-Off Here When DC-4 Failed to Rise

By The Associated Press
PORT DEPOSIT, Md., May 30.—The United Airlines DC-4 that crashed and burned at La Guardia Field Thursday night never got into the air and the pilot after using up about two-thirds of the 1,500-foot runway was trying to halt his quest for lift by braking and ground looping.

All-night, on-the-scene inquiries by both the company and officials of the Civil Aeronautics Board established these facts yesterday.

They agreed also that the wreckage, described by a company official as "at almost unbelievable suddenness," hit Capt. Basil R. Baldwin, the pilot, to decide against proceeding with the take-off, but they differed on whether the pilot had been apprised of approaching wind shifts before the take-off.

The death toll in the disaster rose to thirty-nine yesterday.

Theodore A. Alway, 37-year-old Tuscarora chemist, a Navy lieutenant in the war who had boarded the plane bound for Cleveland where he was to have been married today, died in Chicago hospital.

Big Aircraft Blown to Pieces In Blast After 1,500-Foot Fall

Eye-Witnesses at Port Deposit, Md., Say DC-4 Turned Over in Air, Plunged Into Forest, and Flames Shot Up

By The Associated Press
PORT DEPOSIT, Md., May 30.—Road when he glanced skyward yesterday to the crash of the Eastern Air Lines DC-4 plane said he saw it plummet almost vertically from an altitude of about 1,500 feet. The explosion that followed shook nearby homes and buildings within a five-mile radius.

Mrs. Cora Caldwell, one of the witnesses, was standing on the lawn in front of her house, awaiting the arrival of guests, when the plane came into sight. Her daughter, Ann, 19 years old, suddenly cried, "Look, mother, the plane is falling."

Horrified, Mrs. Caldwell, her daughter and her son, Harold, 17, saw the plane "turn over on its back" and drop to earth in near-by woods. Flames from the wreckage rose high in the air, Mrs. Caldwell said later, and thick columns of black smoke enveloped the scene.

Another witness, Clifton Jackson, 40, a truck driver for a Baltimore oil company, was riding along the Port Deposit-Perryville road when he saw the crash.

60 BODIES REMOVED

Parts of Craft Scattered Over Wide Area as It Hits and Explodes

By The Associated Press
PORT DEPOSIT, Md., May 30.—Forty-nine passengers, including a 7-year-old infant, and all four members of the crew of an Eastern Air Lines plane making a non-stop flight from the Newark, N. J., Airport to Baltimore, were killed near here at 8:45 o'clock tonight when the plane crashed and exploded in a wooded swamp area in Cecil County.

The craft, a DC-4, had taken off from Newark at 5:30 P. M. Eastern daylight saving time, on Flight No. 602. It was last heard from by wireless telephone when it passed over Philadelphia at 4:27 P. M. The pilot was William E. Coxey, former skipper of the Mars and the Hawaii Lines.

It was the worst crash in the history of American commercial airlines. It came within twenty-four hours after thirty-nine persons were killed when a similar plane, a DC-4 of United Air Lines, burst into flames near La Guardia Field, N. Y., last night as it was taking off for Cleveland, with

FLAMES HAMPER RESCUE

Passengers, Including a Baby, Burned Beyond Recognition — Investigation Is Begun

By The Associated Press
PORT DEPOSIT, Md., May 30.—The bodies of the 49 passengers and four crew members of the Eastern Air Lines DC-4 that crashed and burned at La Guardia Field Thursday night were being removed today from the wreckage. The bodies were so badly burned that they were beyond recognition.

The investigation of the crash is being handled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which is working with the Civil Aeronautics Board and the Maryland State Police.

32 of Dead Here Identified; Police Plan Expedite Task

By The Associated Press
PORT DEPOSIT, Md., May 30.—The police here today identified 32 of the 49 people who died in the crash of the Eastern Air Lines DC-4 plane. The police plan to expedite the task of identifying the remaining 17 bodies.

The bodies were being removed from the wreckage by the Maryland State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Front page, *The New York Times*, May 31, 1947.

Staff of the Civil Aeronautics Board, returning from La Guardia Field after investigating the earlier United Airlines crash, "watched helplessly" as the Eastern Airlines DC-4, flying three to five miles ahead of them, "nosed down," crashed and exploded. CAB investigators landed at Aberdeen Proving Ground and rushed to the crash scene. [Ibid.]

According to an eyewitness, "I saw the plane in a steep glide and several gleaming things, like metal, fell away from the plane as it hurtled down." Were those "gleaming things" more peculiar phenomena?

In the newspapers reviewed for this manuscript, I found worldwide that twenty-nine aircraft were destroyed within 72 hours of the "Juarez Incident" and 198 people died. Other air crashes included:

A U. S. Army Air Forces B-29 bomber which crashed around midnight at the end of the runway at Ladd Field, Alaska, on May 29, 1947, when it failed to gain altitude on take off. Three died. The bomber lifted several feet off the ground and flew over a low rise right into a swamp next to the Chena River. [*Las Cruces Sun-News*, June 1, 1947.]

3 STILL Missing in Alaska
FAIRBANKS, Alaska, May 30
(AP)—Nine members of a twelve-man B-29 crew escaped when the heavy bomber crashed shortly after its take-off from Ladd Field yesterday and burst into flames about a mile east of the end of the runway, it was confirmed today.
Three crew members are missing. The nine men who escaped and were taken to the hospital were released today.
The accident occurred just out of sight of the field, over the brow of a low hill lying in the bend of the Chena River. Nothing was left of the plane but its skeleton a few minutes after the crash.
The names of the missing men were not released here.

"3 Still Missing In Alaska," *The New York Times*, May 30, 1947, page 5.

- On May 29, two Dutch "Army planes" collided in mid-air at Tillburg, The Netherlands, killing twelve. [Ibid.]
- On May 29, an Icelandic Airways DC-3 "crashed into a mountain top" in northern Iceland killing 25. [Ibid.]
- On May 29, a Junkers transport plane, operated by the French government, crashed into a mountain in southern Algeria 650 miles south of Algiers, killing three. [Ibid.]

- On May 30, a U. S. Army C-54 (DC-4) transport crashed into a mountain ridge, reportedly miscalculating its altitude by less than 100 feet outside Tokyo on final approach to Tachikawa Air Field. Forty-two people died, including the Deputy Commander of Kimpo Air Field, Korea, and a reporter from the *Detroit News*. [*Ibid.*] If this would have been a commercial flight, it would have replaced the La Guardia United Airlines crash as the largest air disaster in U. S. history at the time.
- On May 30, a Royal Air Force Liberator bomber blew up as it sat on the runway. Four civilians were injured. No explanation was given for the blast. [*Ibid.*]
- On May 30, a China Air Transport DC-3 made a forced landing after fire broke out in one of its wings shortly after take off. [*The New York Times*, May 30, 1947.]
- On May 30, 1947, *The New York Times* reported that a DC-4 operated by the Colombian government was forced down shortly after takeoff due to a "blown out windshield" and twelve people were injured.
- On May 31, a Piper Cub and a Navy DC-4 operated by the Office of Naval Research collided in mid-air at Red Bank, New Jersey. The DC-4 (related to the Naval Research Lab at WSPG) returned to base after the light plane ran into it and crashed killing two. *The New York Times* reported on May 30, 1947: "The Navy pilot said that he first saw the light plane flying about 500 feet above and 1,000 feet to his left ... and then he lost sight of it. When he saw it the next time, it was in an almost vertical attitude, diving straight into the path of his plane." [*The New York Times*, June 1, 1947.]
- On May 31, an aircraft mechanic was killed and his passenger critically injured when the light plane he was flying could not maintain altitude and crashed into a field at Hemet, California. [*The Arizona Republic*, June 1, 1947.]
- On May 31, a U. S. Army "twin engine training bomber" with four on board disappeared on a flight between Barksdale Field, Shreveport, Louisiana, and Brooks Field, San Antonio, Texas. [*Ibid.*]
- *The New York Times* reported on May 31, 1947, that a former Army BT-13 failed to come out of a steep dive at an air show in Westfield, Massachusetts and crashed into trees. The wreckage then burst into flames and killed one person.
- On May 31, a British Vampire jet operated by the Swedish Air Force in Stockholm, Sweden, flew into a brick wall of an industrial building when it lost altitude in flight and exploded killing one. [*The New York Times*, June 1, 1947.]
- On May 31, a former Army AT-6 monoplane coming in for a landing "miscalculated" its altitude and struck the cab of a moving truck, killing the truck driver and then crashed into a moving car at Connellsville, PA. [*Ibid.*]

ARMY PLANE HITS TRUCK
Driver Is Killed and the Pilot Is Only Slightly Injured
 CONNELLSVILLE, Pa., June 1 (AP)—An Army AT-6 monoplane, coming in low for a landing, dropped too fast and struck the cab of a moving trailer truck on Route 119 today, killing the driver, although the pilot escaped with minor hurts.
 The plane then hit another automobile on the highway adjoining the Connellsville airport before it nose-dived into an embankment near the runway.
 Sgt. William Smiley of Uniontown, Pa., the pilot, walked out of the wrecked cockpit, where he was held fast by a safety belt, with only minor bruises.
 The man killed was David Morris, 38, of Tyrone, S. C., who was driving a truck owned by Dorman Brothers Circus.

Front page, *The New York Times*, June 2, 1947.

- On May 31, a pioneer St. Louis aviator, explorer and balloonist was killed with his son in an airplane crash at Bourbon, Missouri. [*Ibid.*]
- On May 31, a glider being towed by a "two seat monoplane" at approximately 65

mph nosed over into a dive at the moment of release and crashed after a 200-foot descent which killed the pilot instantly at Mastic, Long Island. [Ibid.]

- On June 1, a former Army BT-13 "stalled on take off" fifty feet above the runway and crashed at Gallup, New Mexico. [*Las Cruces Sun-News*, June 3, 1947.]



Front page, *Las Cruces Sun-News*, June 2, 1947.

- On June 1, a seaplane landing in the St. Lawrence River next to the Fairchild Aircraft plant "miscalculated its altitude" and dropped fifty feet moments before landing and killed three.
- On June 1, a U. S. Navy Seabee trainer was destroyed as "a freak wind" prevented it from gaining altitude on take off at Lee Airport, Annapolis, Maryland (U. S. Naval Academy.) [*The New York Times*, June 2, 1947.]



Front page, *The New York Times*, June 2, 1947.

- On June 1, *The New York Times* reported that a light plane carrying two people "was shattered" and burned in Hernando, Argentina, and two Army pilots were killed when their Fockewulf 182 trainer hit a tree top as it was coming in too low for a landing and crashed near Mendoza, Argentina, killing four. [Ibid.]
- On June 1, the *NYT* also reported that an A 2 seat Luscombe trainer crashed ten miles from Reykjavik, Iceland, killing two.

Toll in Iceland Is 25
REYKJAVIK, Iceland, May 30 (AP)—The bodies of twenty-five occupants of an Icelandic Airways DC-3 plane, which crashed on a rocky mountainside in northern Iceland on Thursday, were found in scattered wreckage today.
 Among the twenty-one passengers, all Icelanders and Norwegians, were ten women and four children. The plane, a two-engined craft, carried a crew of four.
 A member of the Icelandic Althing (Parliament), Gardar Thorsteinsson, was among the victims. The plane had been missing since 12:40 P. M. (8:40 A. M., E. S. T.) Thursday, when it disappeared on a flight from Reykjavik to Akureyri, a town on the northern Iceland coast.
 Search parties discovered scattered parts of the craft and the bodies on a steep slope of Hjedinsfjoredur Mountain, which rises from the seashore. It appeared that the plane exploded when it struck the mountainside.

"Toll In Iceland Is 25," *The New York Times*, May 30, 1947, page 5.

- On June 1, five thousand spectators at an air show witnessed a light plane demonstrate a spin that went directly into the ground at Raleigh, North Carolina, killing two. [*The New York Times*, June 2, 1947.]
- On June 1, a U. S. Navy drone spun into the ground during an air show in Philadelphia. [*Ibid.*]

Five days after the May 29, 1947, "Juarez V-2 Incident," Hanson Baldwin reported as military affairs editor for *The New York Times* about the National Antiaircraft Artillery School in Ft. Bliss which had established "the first operational antiaircraft missile battalion in the U. S. Army, although it still remains somewhat experimental." Baldwin had been with General Homer at the May 29th V-2 launch at White Sands. [*The New York Times*, June 4, 1947.]

On June 4, 1947, President Truman requested an immediate extension of the Second War Powers Act from Congress. He said that "the conditions requiring the War Powers Act still exist." [*Las Cruces Sun-News*, June 4, 1947; *The New York Times*, June 5, 1947.]

THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 1947.

TRUMAN STRESSES WAR POWERS NEED

He Urges Leaders in Congress to Push Extension of Some Beyond June 30 Termination

Special to The New York Times.

WASHINGTON, June 4—Majority and minority Congressional leaders discussed with President Truman today the extension of certain war powers, which will expire by termination on June 30.

The specific powers the President considers necessary to extend include authority to control exports of articles in short supply, to apply priority controls and allocations to foods, fertilizers and other scarce commodities domestically, and for the Maritime Commission to charter oil tankers. As on previous occasions when this topic has been the subject of a legislative conference at the White House, the President went over his reasons for wanting the powers to be extended.

After the conference Senator Alben W. Barkley of Kentucky, minority leader, said that a new terminal date of Feb. 1, 1948, might be set on priority controls so that the next session of Congress would have an opportunity to review the domestic economic situation at that time.

The President and his advisers have sought to justify continuation of export controls as a means of assuring orderly relief distribution of supplies to needy countries. Such control might also serve as an implement of the Truman Doctrine, by permitting the Chief Executive to withhold or grant economic aid, depending on the relations between the United States and any given foreign nation.

The question of continued operation by the Maritime Commission of the 300 tankers it is now employing is being asked for the purpose of avoiding a possible oil shortage on the Eastern coast of the United States next winter.

Bills to carry forward these Presidential authorities, while letting the bulk of the Second War Powers Act lapse, are pending before the Judiciary Committee of the House and the Senate.

What President Truman tried to do today was to impart a sense of urgency to the Congressional leaders, who must act in the final rush for adjournment.

5 Germans Sentenced, 2 to Die

DACHAU, Germany, June 4 (AP)—Two German civilians were sentenced to death and three others to prison terms by United States military courts today for the murder of five unarmed American fliers after their capture in wartime.

Front page, *The New York Times*, June 5, 1947.

The extension was justified on the basis of the government's need to retain control of commodity prices and supplies of critical raw materials. It also extended the federal government's ability to censor news reports that could be viewed as having a potential damaging effect on United States national security interests. On June 4, 1947, twenty days

before the first public sightings of flying discs during the "great flying disc scare of 1947," the ability of the U. S. government to censor the national media was intact. [Ibid.]

Round-the-World Series of Plane Wrecks Kills 180

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

A world-wide series of disastrous crackups the past few days has taken 180 lives — more than a third of the 428 killed in major commercial and military crashes so far this year.

At least 26 other persons were injured, some critically, and three fliers were missing. Investigators and witnesses reported the apparent causes of the crackups were varied.

53 Die in One Crash

The worst tragedy and biggest plane disaster in the history of the United States was the crash of an Eastern Airlines DC-4 Friday near Port Deposit, Md., with the loss of 53 lives. The cause still was in doubt but some witnesses told investigators they saw the tail section of the big plane come off before it plunged in flames.

Less than 24 hours earlier, the previous worst crackup crash in the nation's aviation history occurred when a United Air Lines plane was wrecked in an attempted takeoff in New York, causing 41 deaths. Investigators said a sudden shift in wind took place as the plane was attaining air speed.

A flight instructor and his student were killed Saturday when their light plane crashed after it and a Navy DC-4 collided near Red Bank, N. J. The Navy plane returned to its base and none of its passengers was injured.

Army Wreck Kills 40

Near Tokyo, an Army transport crashed in the mountains Thursday killing 40. The American craft struck a 500-foot ridge as it was approaching Tachikawa for a landing.

Bad visibility was suggested as a possible cause for the crackup of an Icelandic Airways plane which struck a mountain in northern Iceland Thursday, killing 20. Twelve persons were killed in the collision of two planes Thursday at Muroto, the Netherlands.

Three plane crashes in Argentina the past three days killed four and injured one critically.

Other crackups included Three were missing and nine escaped when an Army B-26 crashed on a takeoff at Fairbanks, Alaska Thursday. Twelve were injured at Bogota, Columbia when a Columbian army airforce transport crash landed Friday after striking a buzzard. A Royal Air Force Liberator bomber flew up on an airport runway Friday at Litchfield, England, injuring four civilians.

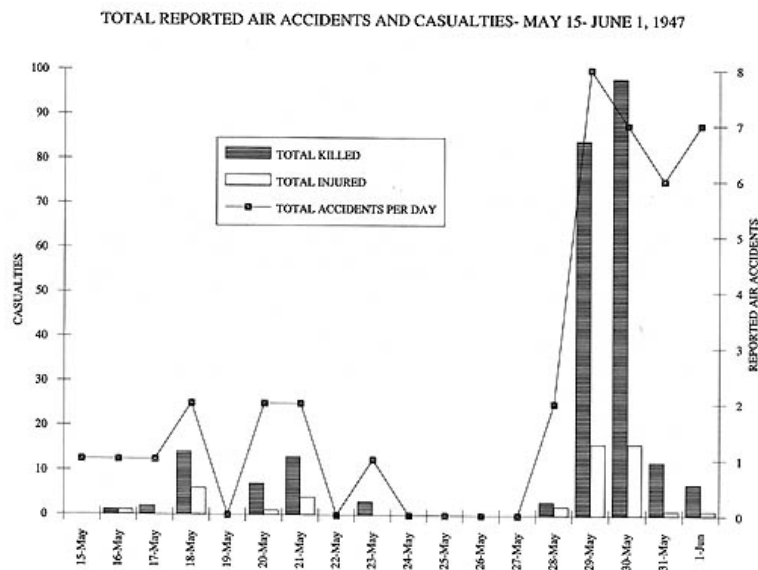
Domestic Travel Low

Three French government fliers were killed Thursday when their Junkers transport plane crashed in a mountain range 650 miles south of Algiers.

Domestic plane travel at La Guardia Field, New York, dropped below peak capacity Saturday. Although some airline representatives said unofficially the recent air crashes might be the cause, the majority said the condition was normal in the middle of a weekend holiday.

Front page, *Las Cruces Sun-News*, June 1, 1947.

Big Spike in Air Accidents Within 72 Hours of Juarez Incident



Over eighteen days between May 15 and June 1, 1947, there were about 80 reported airplane crashes/accidents, with a big spike within 72 hours of Juarez incident.

Continued in **Part 10** - White Sands and OSRD: The Atomic Bomb and V-2s

Credits

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