

(THIS CRASH IS NO LONGER A MYSTERY. SEE [THE MYSTERY IS SOLVED.](#))

Airplane Crash in Goucher

The recent terrible crash of a C-130 Air Force plane near Savanna, Georgia reminded me of a long-ago crash near Pacolet. The details of the Savanna crash are all too clear. All nine crewmen were killed and they were from the Puerto Rico Air National Guard. Most of the details of the Pacolet crash have been lost to time and much of the information about the airplane and its crew remain a mystery. The actual crash location was somewhere in the Goucher community. The exact location is one of the many mysteries about this disaster. At this late date, even the type airplane is not 100% certain but it was believed to be a two engine B-25 bomber like shown below. The year when the crash occurs is also now a mystery but it is thought to be in either 1952, 1953, or 1954. I think there were three or four men in the crew.



The crash happened in the Goucher Community fairly close to where I lived. I was 15 or 16 years old at the time. The accident made a big impression on me. I went with my brother and several friends to see the site. My memory is that the crash site was two or three miles, going west, from Hwy 150 on the Goucher Green Bethel Road "S11-112". The site was on the right hand side of the road about ¼ or ½ mile from the pavement. (Because of their similarity, it is possible that the site was going west on the Goucher School Road "S11-138". These roads are close together and are parallel.) The following map shows the area involved and the two potential roads involved. My memory is that the crash was inside the crosshatched area off the Goucher Green Bethel Road.



I remember the crash site being somewhere in the crosshatched area off the Goucher Green Bethel Road but I may be mistaken.

For the first day or so, the site was blocked off by the military as they removed the remains and most of the wreckage. Eventually, the site was opened to the public and a group of us went to look at the wreck up close. There were no big pieces of the plane left but lots of small pieces. In normal teenage behavior, we picked up several things like gage faces, map pieces etc. as “souvenirs”. Being a chronic pack rat, I still have some of the pieces from the airplane after all of these years. Some photographs of these items are shown on the next page.



Three of these are parts of instrument gages. The item on the left, bottom, is the burnt lens of a pair of sun glasses.

A number of times I have tried to find out more information about the plane and its crew. There are a number of sites on the internet that are supposed to be a listing of military plane crashes. For some reason, this crash is not included on any list that I could find. Recently, I contacted the New York Air National Guard about the crash but received no answer.

It is very likely that some of the folks still living in the Goucher community remember this incident and may have more information about it. If so, I would certainly appreciate them dropping me an email and telling what they remember.

Marker Needed

The airplane that crashed in Goucher was one of nearly 10,000 B-25 Mitchell bombers produced by the United States for use in World War II. Production of the airplane started in 1941. Sixteen B-25's were used in the famous Doolittle Raid on Tokyo in April of 1942. These airplanes took off on a one way mission from the deck of the aircraft carrier USS Hornet. The planes were never designed or intended for carrier operations but they all made a successful take off.

It was used by other countries long after the end of World War II. The B-25's saw active service in Indonesia up until 1979. It is estimated that there are only about 45 surviving B-25's that can still fly.

Many B-25's were lost in combat but some, like our Goucher plane, crashed in other circumstances. The most famous B-25 crash happened on July 28, 1945 when one flew into the Empire State Building in New York City. The airplane was flying to Newark New Jersey in heavy fog when it hit the building. The three crewmen on the airplane were killed and 11 civilians in the building also died. There were B-25 crashes not related to combat during the war and after the war all over the world. These military men that died in these crashes were serving our country as surely as those that died in combat. These men need to be remembered.

Recently, right here in South Carolina, in Oconee County, an effort has been made to remember those who died in a B-25 plane crash there. On March 10, 1943, the plane crashed into a mountain north of Walhalla, South Carolina. Residents of the area and veterans groups have successfully placed markers to remember the tragic event. The full story can be read at:

(<http://archive.independentmail.com/news/crew-killed-in-1943-army-air-corps-plane-crash-honored-in-oconee-county-ep-348455584-346120032.html>.)

It seems to me, that those men who died in Goucher, so suddenly and so far away from home, should also be remembered. A roadside historical marker near the site of the crash is badly needed. It would also be nice if information about the crash could be put on display in the Pacolet Museum. We welcome any comments that you might have about details of the crash and the possibility of erecting the historical monument.

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