



### **The Mystery Is Solved.**

(See <http://pacoletmemories.com/CrashStory.pdf>)

Thanks to the members of the Pacolet Facebook groups most of the questions surrounding the airplane crash in the Goucher have been answered. This is a summary of what we know about the tragedy .

Who - Three members of the New York Air National Guard died.

What - The men were crew members of a B-25 “Mitchell” bomber that crashed. They were on a training mission flying from Griffiss Air Force Base in Rome, New York to Donaldson Air Force Base in Greenville, South Carolina.

Where - The crash occurred close to the intersection of Soapstone Road (SC Road S-11-128) and the White Plains Rd. near the White Plains and Goucher communities.

When - The plane left Griffiss Air Force about 1:30 PM on the afternoon of January 10, 1954. It crashed slightly before 5 PM that afternoon.

Why - It is not clear exactly why the plane crashed. Eyewitnesses on the ground described the plane as having engine trouble before the crash. Evidently, there was an explosion and or fire while the plane was still in flight. Something happened to cause the tail section to be separated from the main fuselage. The tail section landed about 1 ½ miles away from the main wreck site near the White Plains colored church.

### **Pacolet Facebook Groups Information**

I am indebted to members of the group for supplying critical information on the crash. Jackie Banks and Vicki Lawson provided information from the *Gaffney Ledger* newspaper. Easter Fisher sent me articles from the *Florence Morning News* newspaper. Particularly helpful was a telephone call from Harold Addis who remembered the crash when he was a small boy. You can read Harold’s story later in this article. Harold’s information allowed us to determine the exact location of the crash.

**Read the entire story of the crash on the following pages.**



### **The Complete Story of the B-25 Crash**

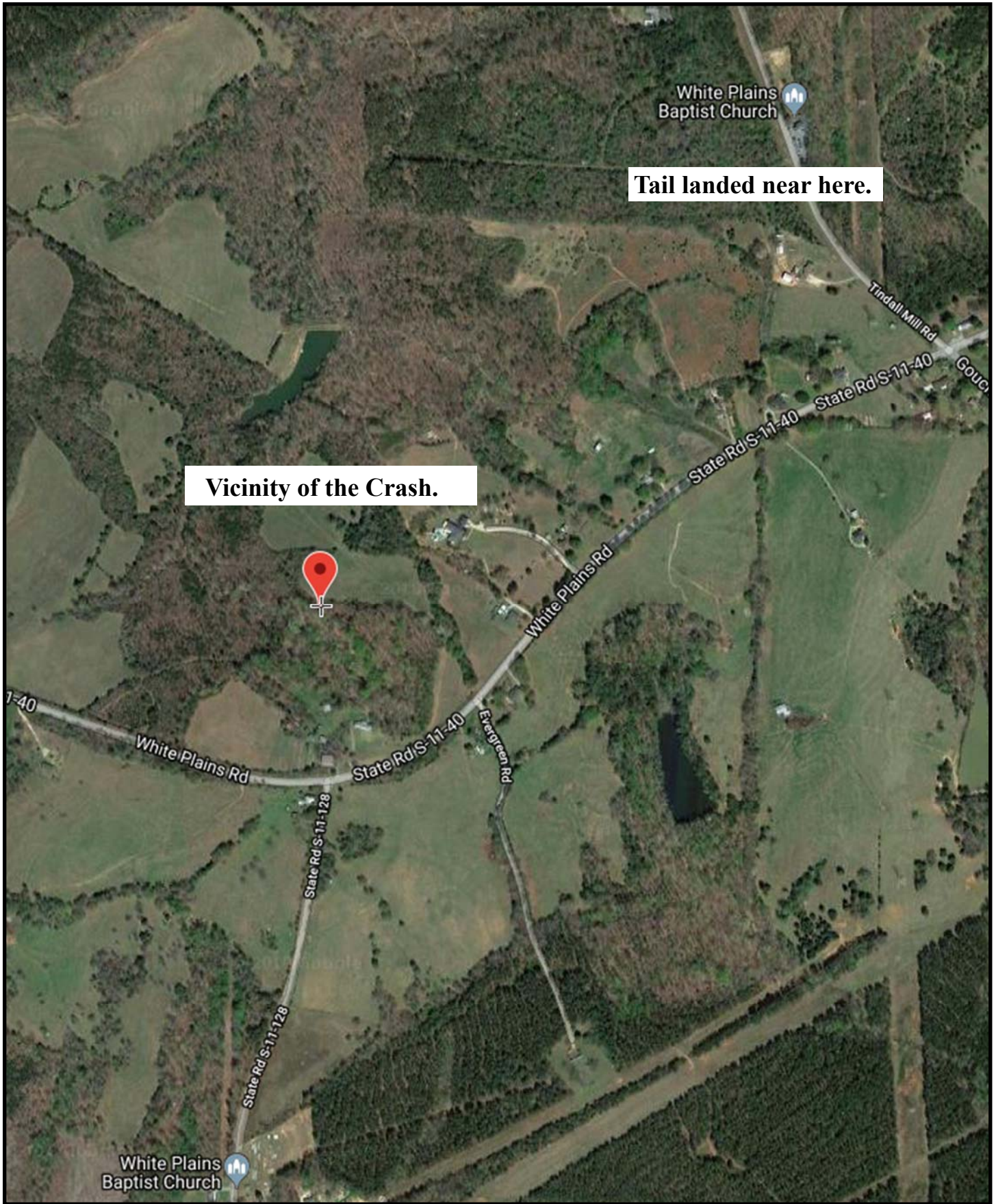
It was a cold Sunday on January 10, 1954 at Griffiss Air Force Base in Rome New York. The three-man crew of the B-25 medium bomber had been doing preflight checks of their airplane. They were preparing for a training mission that would take them to Donaldson Air Force Base in Greenville, South Carolina. The distance for the trip would be approximately 700 miles. At their normal cruising speed of 230 mph, the trip would take less than four hours. Under combat conditions the B-25 might require five or even six men in the crew. The trip to South Carolina was to be a routine training flight with only a three-man crew.

The pilot was Col. Paul C. Schauer, 42 years old. He was also the special assistant on reconnaissance and intelligence to the Griffiss Air Force Base commander. The copilot was Major Russell B. Kraus who was 38 years old. The third crewman was an enlisted man, the flight engineer, Airman First Class Frederick W. Walker, who was only 22 years old. All three men were stationed at Griffiss Air Force Base.

They taxied out to the runways, and got permission and instructions for takeoff. They were airborne about 1:30 PM. They climbed to altitude and set their course to the southwest bound for Donaldson. They were soon out of New York State and flew on to cross Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia and North Carolina before entering South Carolina. Evidently, things went well until they were almost in sight of Donaldson Air Force Base and were only about 40 miles away. Then something strange happened. The bomber contacted the Spartanburg Airport about 4:30 PM asking permission to land there because it had “a patient aboard” needing hospitalization. There are no surviving records to tell which of the crewmen was ill or what the problem was.

Spartanburg cleared the plane for a landing and said the ambulance would be waiting. Before it could land something went terribly wrong. The plane crashed shortly before 5 PM just off the White Plains Rd. near the White Plains and Goucher communities in Cherokee County, SC. All three crewmen were killed instantly and the wreckage burned for several hours. The plane broke apart in midair just before the crash. The tail section landed about a mile and a half away from the main wreck site near the White Plains colored church on Tindall Mill Rd.





View of the general crash site area.

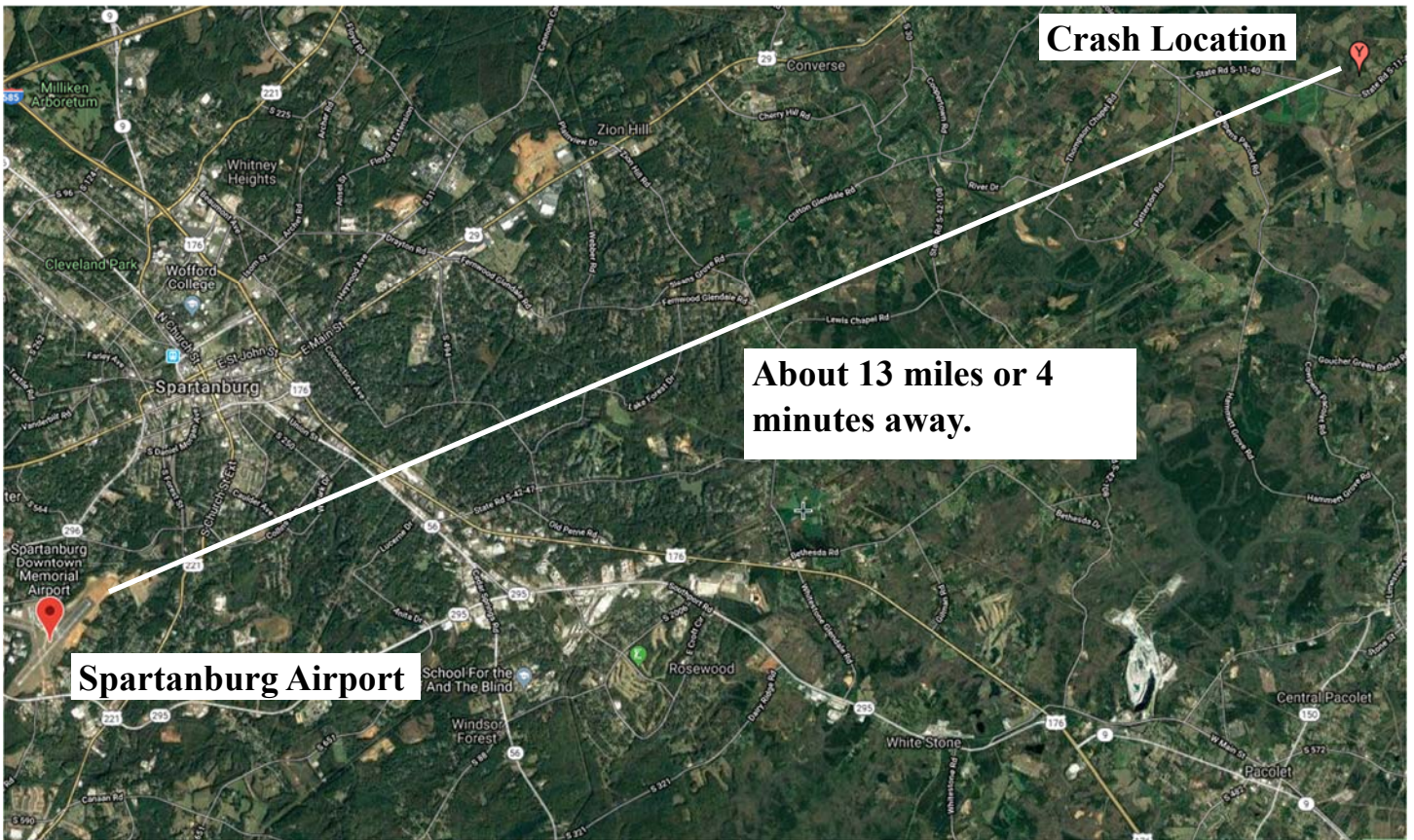


Closer view of the crash site.

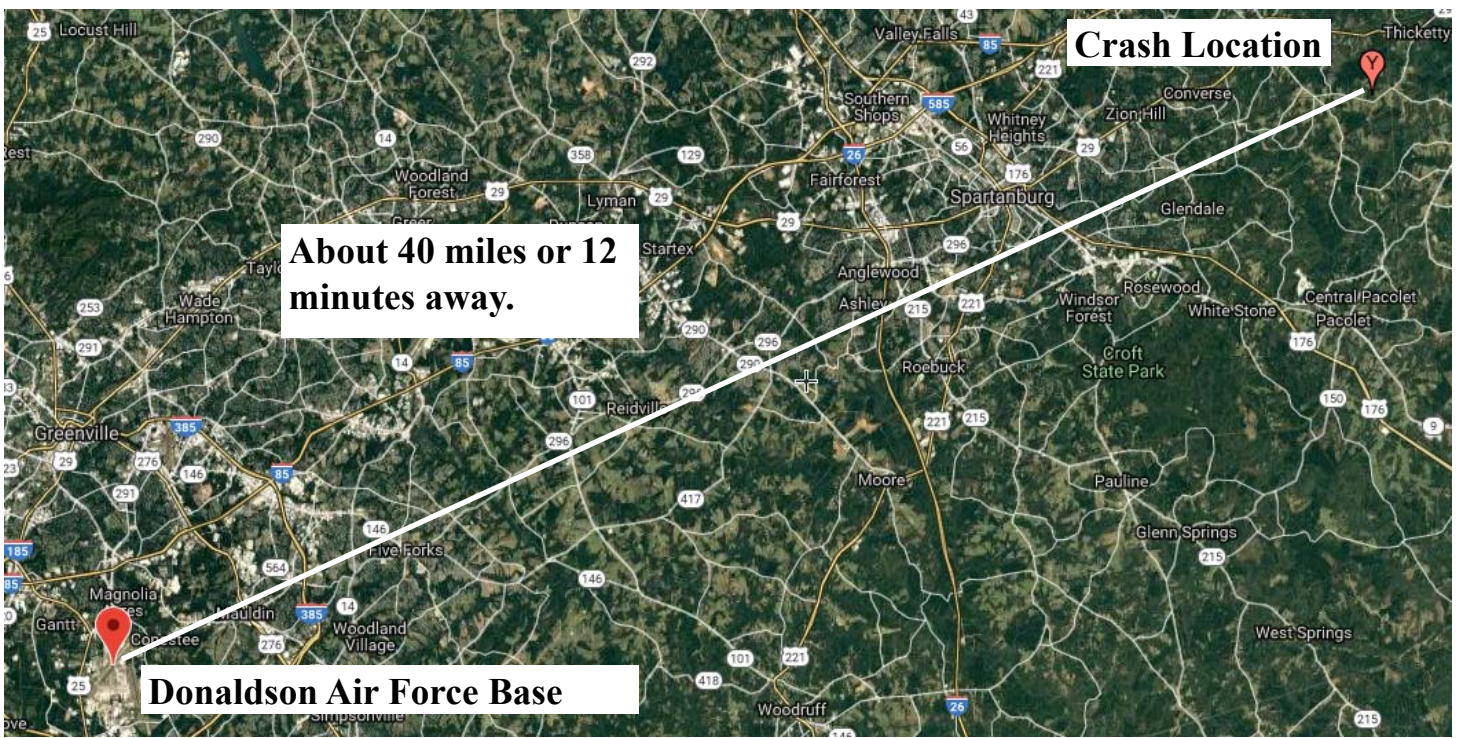
Eyewitness accounts say that the plane was having engine trouble shortly before the crash. In his investigation the County Coroner said the plane was definitely burning before it hit the ground. He said the tail assembly, a toolbox, and portions of Air Force clothing, described as an officer's, were found scattered within a radius of 1 to 2 miles from the main body of the plane. They all had been partly scorched and burned.

The airplane had almost reached the Spartanburg airport when it crashed. The crash scene is only about 13 miles from the airport. At their regular cruising speed they would reach this in less than four minutes. It is possible that they could have seen the airport before they crashed. The crash scene was about 40 miles away from the original destination of Donaldson Air Force Base. They would have been there in about 12 minutes.





Relation of the crash site to the Spartanburg Airport.

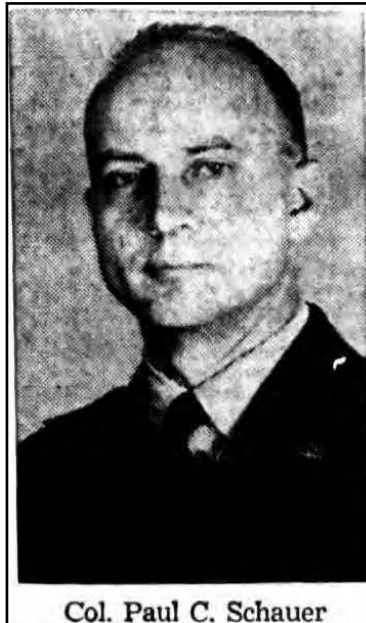


Relation of the crash site to Donaldson Air Force Base.



## The Crew

*(The following information about the crew has been obtained from several sources.)*



The pilot, Col. Paul C. Schauer, had reported to Griffiss Air Force Base in August 1953. He was educated at Dayton University, Indiana Technical College, and Georgetown University where he received a Master of Arts degree. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the infantry reserve of the U.S. Army in February, 1933. He was named a flying cadet in October, 1938. A year later he was rated as a pilot after graduating from primary and advanced flying schools at Randolph and Kelly Field in Texas. He received his regular commission as a second lieutenant in the Air Corps in 1940 and was assigned to active duty in the Air Corps Reserve.

Col. Schauer saw extensive duty in the South Pacific during World War II. He was the commander of the 4th Photographic Reconnaissance and Mapping group from July 18, 1943 until June 7, 1944. The group, based successively on New Caledonia, Espiritu Santo, Guadalcanal, and Morotai, flew reconnaissance missions over enemy territory to supply air force units with target and damage assessment photographs and to provide army and navy units with intelligence on Japanese troop concentrations, installations, shore defenses, supply routes, and shipping.

After the war, Col. Schauer was instrumental in developing mapping and charting techniques for use by the Air Force. In 2006, he was posthumously inducted into the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NAG) Hall of Fame. Read more at: (<https://www.nga.mil/About/History/NGAinHistory/Pages/ColPaulCSchauer.aspx>).

Colonel Schauer was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.



## Paul C Schauer

BIRTH 5 Dec 1911  
DEATH 10 Jan 1954 (aged 42)  
BURIAL [Arlington National Cemetery](#)  
Arlington, Arlington County, Virginia, USA  
PLOT Sec: 7, Site: 10239-A  
MEMORIAL ID 49309095 · [View Source](#)



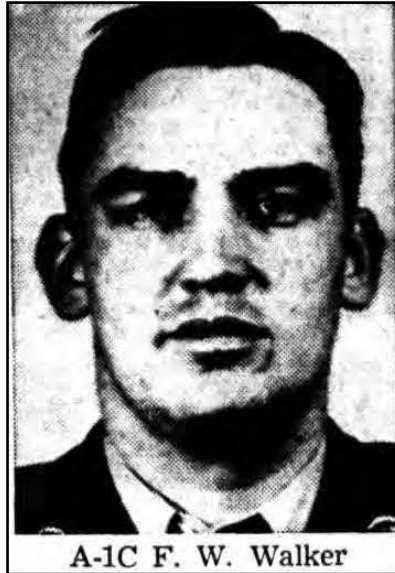
Maj. Russell B. Kraus was the copilot and was 38 years old. He was from Detroit, Michigan. He was chief of the Intelligence Indexing Office, Reconnaissance and Intelligence Division at the Rome Air Development Center (RADC). Unfortunately, nothing else is known about Major Kraus' service.

Major Kraus was buried in Michigan.




## Russell B. Kraus

BIRTH 29 Dec 1915  
Michigan, USA  
DEATH 10 Jan 1954 (aged 38)  
USA  
BURIAL [Roseland Park Cemetery](#)  
Berkley, Oakland County, Michigan, USA  
PLOT Section 42 Lot 296 Grave 10  
MEMORIAL ID 179898190 · [View Source](#)



Airman First Class Frederick W. Walker was the flight engineer and was 22 years old. He was from Snyder, New York. Also, nothing else is known about Airman Walker's service.

Airman Walker was buried in New York.

	<h2>Frederick Wilson Walker</h2> <table><tr><td>BIRTH</td><td>18 Feb 1931</td></tr><tr><td>DEATH</td><td>10 Jan 1954 (aged 22)</td></tr><tr><td>BURIAL</td><td><u>Long Island National Cemetery</u> East Farmingdale, Suffolk County, New York, USA</td></tr><tr><td>PLOT</td><td>2G, 5694</td></tr><tr><td>MEMORIAL ID</td><td>2845874 · <a href="#">View Source</a></td></tr></table>	BIRTH	18 Feb 1931	DEATH	10 Jan 1954 (aged 22)	BURIAL	<u>Long Island National Cemetery</u> East Farmingdale, Suffolk County, New York, USA	PLOT	2G, 5694	MEMORIAL ID	2845874 · <a href="#">View Source</a>
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### Changes

The world has changed a lot since that cold day in January, 1954. Both Griffiss Air Force Base and Donaldson Air Force Base have been deactivated and no longer exist. There are no more B-25's in service with the Air Force. Indeed, there are no more propeller driven bombers in service with the U.S. Air Force, all of them are now jets. What has not changed is the type men in the military service of the United States. They are brave and resolute and still prepared to lay down their life for their country just as those three men did 64 years ago.



### **Marker to Remember the Crew**

A marker is badly needed near the crash scene to remember these three brave men. I am not sure how to proceed to get such a marker erected. There's a state agency that erects roadside historical monuments. However, I don't know if they would do one for an airplane crash. Since it is in Cherokee County, it is possible that the county government or Historical Association might get involved. One possible approach is to form a committee of people interested in erecting a marker. This committee could be organized on Facebook and could determine how to get the marker erected and what it would cost. Fundraising for the marker could also be done using the Pacolet groups on Facebook. The Pacolet Memories website is available to help in this effort.

## Sources for The Story

### Gaffney Ledger

Thanks to Jackie Banks and Vicki Lawson for bringing to my attention the article from the paper on Jan. 12, 1954. The text of the article is as follows:

#### Plane Radioed Twice Shortly before Crash

Air Force officials began an investigation Monday into the crash of a B-25 twin-engined "Mitchell" bomber in the White Plains section Sunday afternoon where three crewmen were killed.

The body of the third member of the crew was recovered under the twisted wreckage about 1 o'clock Monday morning after an eight hour search. The other two airmen were found in the plane earlier.

According to Griffiss Air Force Base officials, the plane left its home base at Rome, New York, at 1:30 PM Sunday afternoon on a routine training flight to Donaldson Air Force Base at Greenville. It crashed shortly before 5 PM in the edge of a clump of pine trees behind the home of Misses Mae and Bessie Crocker, 8 miles south of here.

Miss Lou McGee, of the Chesnee Road, a Gaffney high school senior, said she heard on her short wave radio the bomber contact the Spartanburg airport about 4:30 PM asking permission to land there because it had "a patient aboard" needing hospitalization. Miss McGee said Spartanburg cleared the plane for a landing and said the ambulance would be waiting.

The coroner said "the plane was definitely burning before it hit the ground." He said the tail assembly, a toolbox, and portions of Air Force clothing, described as an officer's, were found scattered within a radius of 1 to 2 miles from the main body of the plane. They all had been partly scorched and burned.

Joe Pennington, of route 4, said he saw the tail assembly of the plane zig-zag to the ground after it ripped off the fuselage and landed near the White Plains colored church a mile and a half from the rest of the bomber. "It sounded like limbs tearing off a big tree."

The CAP dispatched a sidecar mobile radio unit to the scene and through a fixed station operated in Gaffney by Lieut. Lawrence C. Warmouth, kept authorities at the Greenville Base informed of the progress being made in recovering the victims' bodies.



Florence Morning News.

Thanks to Easter Fisher for furnishing me the following article from the paper of January 11, 1954.

### 3 Die in S. C.

GAFFNEY, S.C., Jan. 10 (AP)—An Air Force B-25 medium bomber on a "routine training" flight crashed in flames near here today, killing all three aboard.

The two-engined plane from Griffis Air Force Base, Rome, N.Y., was about 40 miles from its destination, Donaldson Air Force Base, Greenville, S. C., when it crashed about 5 p.m.

The Griffis base identified the airmen as Col. Paul C. Schauer, 42, formerly of Fort Wayne, Ind., the pilot; Maj. Russel B. Kraus, 38, formerly of Detroit, the co-pilot; and Airman 1. C. Frederick W. Walker, 22, formerly of Snyder, N.Y. All were stationed at Rome and made their homes there. Col. Schauer was the special assistant on reconnaissance and intelligence to the Griffis base commander.

A Griffis spokesman described it as a "routine training" mission.

The plane crashed in a field near the home of Mrs. Bessie Crocker in the White Plains community.

A witness, James W. Lipscomb, said the plane did not explode at first. He said he started running toward the wreckage and was about 50 yards away when it exploded and burst into flames.

Lipscomb said he first saw the ship when it broke through the low ceiling over the field. He said it circled the pasture and then nose-dived into the clearing, striking a tree on the way down.

## Three Killed When B-25 From Griffiss Crashes

The bodies of Col. Paul C. Schauer, Maj. Russell B. Kraus, and A-1C Frederick W. Walker, all of Griffiss Air Force Base, have been recovered from the wreckage of their B-25 medium bomber which crashed at 5 p.m. yesterday near Gaffney, S. C., the Griffiss public information office said today.



Col. Paul C. Schauer

Capt. Lawrence L. Browne, public information officer, said the twin-engine plane was on a routine flight from Griffiss to Donaldson AFB, Greenville, S. C., when it crashed.

James W. Lipscomb, who witnessed the crash, said the ship broke through the low ceiling over a pasture belonging to Mrs. Bessie Crocker.

He said the ship circled the pasture and then nosedived into the clearing, striking trees on the edge of the pasture.

Lipscomb said that as he ran toward the ship, it exploded, and caught fire. About a half-hour later, it exploded again.

Fire trucks from Gaffney required about four hours to put out the flames of the wreckage.

### Found Mile Away

The tail of the ship was found about a mile away. Attendants of a funeral home at Gaffney reported finding a tool box, a civilian shirt and sport coat, a safety belt, and a singed pair of officers' trousers about 1½ miles from the wreckage.

The singed trousers led observers to speculate that the ship was on fire before it crashed.

Capt. Browne said the crash is being investigated by the aircraft accident investigating board from Donaldson AFB.

Col. Schauer, 42, the pilot, was special assistant in reconnaissance and intelligence to Brig. Gen. Daniel C. Doubleday, commanding general, Rome Air Development Center.

Maj. Kraus, the co-pilot, was 38 years old. He was chief of the intelligence indexing office, Reconnaissance and Intelligence Division at RADC.

Twenty-two years old, A-1C Walker was the plane's flight engineer.

### Came Here in 1953

Col. Schauer, who reported at Griffiss in August, 1953, was educated at Dayton University, Indiana Technical College and Georgetown University where he received a Master of Arts degree.

Commissioned a second lieutenant in the Infantry Reserve in February, 1933, he was named a flying cadet in October, 1938. After graduating from primary and advanced flying schools at Randolph and Kelly Fields in Texas a year later, he was rated a pilot and assigned to active duty in the Air Corps Reserve, receiving his regular commission as a second lieutenant in the Air Corps in 1940.

In March, 1941, Col. Schauer took part in an aerial photographic project covering the Texas - Mexican Border and later that same year participated in an aerial photographic project covering the greater part of Labrador.

Col. Schauer in November, 1941, took part in tests to determine the best type of altitude reconnaissance planes to be used by the Air Corps in the event of our



Maj. Russell B. Kraus



A-1C F. W. Walker

(TURN TO PAGE 8 UNDER HEAD)  
PLANE CRASH



### **Harold Addis Interview**

He remembered the crash and his father and his brother had gone to see it up close. He said that when the plane crashed, he was about 6 or 7 and his brother was about 14 or 15. They lived on Hwy 29 between Spartanburg and Cowpens. They heard the airplane before it crashed because of its motors sounding funny. They actually heard the crash and saw the smoke from where they lived. His dad took him and his brother to find the location of the crash. It was off of White Plains Rd. near its intersection with Soapstone Road (S-11-128). His dad took his brother and they walked back into the woods to the crash scene. However, his dad would not let him go because he was so young. He remembers the exact location and the incident. The crash was quite a ways off the road behind a brick house that sits near the intersection and is still there. When they got there the airplane was still burning and burned for quite a long time. He had not heard that the tail section had landed in a different spot.

### **US Army Air Corps 4th Reconnaissance Group Website**

**[http://www.armyaircorpsmuseum.org/4th Reconnaissance Group.cfm](http://www.armyaircorpsmuseum.org/4th_Reconnaissance_Group.cfm)**