108 1/2 BRIGADE
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99th B. I. A.

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PIECES OF THE FILE

- Report of final findings.
- Statement of the Battalion Chief concerning the probable causes of accident.
- Statement of Lt Mollard 28 July 1947
- Report of the different mountainers : (Crew)
    - 1 August
    - 4 August
    - 7 August
    - 8 August
- Report of weather situation from 31 October to 2 November 1946.
- Map of L'Aiguille des Glaciers (Side S E)
- Enlargement of search zones
- Maps at 1/200.000
- Photography of L'Aigueille des Glaciers (Side S.E.)
- List of articles found.

Bourg St. Maurice, 9 August 1947
Battalion Chief CHALANDON
Commanding the 99th B.I.A.
s/ Chalandon

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/s/ CLARENCE S. PARKER
Capt. A.C.

99th B.I.A. Les Chapieux 7 August 1947

Lieutenant Mollard Noel commanding the S.E.S. of the 99th B.I.A. - Les Chapieux

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The Battalion Chief commanding the 99th B.I.A.

SUBJECT: Location of plane

Submitted herewith is a report of further searches made at the Aiguille des Glaciers on 7 August 1947.

Departure: 0400 hours. Return 1800 hours.

1. Planes of searches: The upper rim of the glacier of Glaciers (North side).

The three couloirs going up to 3,730, place where the plane wrecked.

2. Crew making the search: Lt. MOLLARD - Sgt BECK - 10 guides

3. No remains (bodies) were found.

The searches will be carried on, on the 8 August 1947. Four crews will participate in the searches under the supervision of Sgt BOIS. They will search again the glacier de l'Estellette and the glacier of LEX BLANCHE which is at the same altitude as the wreckage place.

4. Things found: will be given to the US mission.

s/MOLLARD

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99th B.I.A. Les Chapieux 8 August 1947

S.E.S. Lt Mollard commanding S.E.S.

to

Battalion Chief commanding the 99th B.I.A.

SUBJECT: Location of US Plane

Submitted herewith report of last searches made on 8 August 1947 at the wreckage place of the US plane B-17. Searches were made by 4 crews under the supervision of Sgt BOIS.

Departure 0400 hours. Returned 1800 hours.

1. Places searches: The upper rim of the glacier of the Lex Blanche. The summit of the glacier of the Estellette, all courleirs of the Lex Blanche and the Estellette.

2. Things found: No remains, no debris of plane on the glacier of the Lex Blanche.

3. Conclusions: After repeated and careful searches (total number of ascensions: 32) on the Aiguille du Glacier, the glaciers, crevasses, rims and rocks surrounding the Aiguille du Glacier in France and Italy, no more remains have been found. After investigation it seems that the hit against the slope of the mountain and the violent explosion of the plane have pulverized the bodies as well as the main parts of the plane.

As an example, parts of bodies and some parts of the plane were found at one and a half kilometers from the place of the wreckage.

s/Mollard

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Weather Station of Bourg St. Maurice

Period from 31 October 1946 to 2 November 1946 Weather Observed at the Station

31 October

0530 Very cloudy, but clouds rather high. Moderate wind from East. Good visibility.
0800 Wind blows much from time to time. Sky cloudy.
1200 Sky completely clear. Clouds disappeared (directed South-East).
1300 Clouds appear again. Wind is getting stronger and blows from the East. Nebulosity is varying, increases or disappears, from time to time.
1830 Clouds are very high and the sky is getting clear. Wind is weaker. The wind is weaker in the evening and the sky is slightly cloudy. This weather station not being activated during the night, observation of the weather has been made only the next morning. But it seems that the nebulosity has been the same at night and the wind moderate.

1 November

0600 Cloudy sky, smooth wind. Later, the sky is getting clearer.
1200 Nebulosity increases and clouds appear but high in the sky. Wind starts to blow more violently (13 meters per second).
1545 Wind does not blow, but clouds are getting bigger and lower. Clouds start to appear as low as the slopes of the mountains.
1630 Clouds are getting lower and lower to 600 meters. Rain starts to fall at around 1700, it lasts one hour.
2100 Clouds still very low and thick, visibility is very bad since 1800 hours. This is the end of the observations for the day. Sky must have been very cloudy during the next night.

This resume of weather observation was taken from file at the station by the Station chief, Lt. PIAS

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NOMENCLATURE OF THE DIFFERENT OBJECTS AND DEBRIS FOUND ON THE PLACE OF WRECKAGE OF THE B-17.

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REMAINS (bodies): 1 arm, 1 head, 2 feet, diferrent remains.

PAPERS: A. 1 Wallet containing:
21 dollars (bills) and 3 cheques ($100.00 each)
1 driver license (W.S. Cassel)
1 permanent pas (W.S. Cassel)
1 PX Card
1 card from Changhrill Club
1 card from the Twilight Club
1 Medical record
1 Card, 61st Troop Carrier Sq.
1 Membership card (club)
1 Certificate of release from hospital
2 Ration Cards from hospital
14 PX tickets (1/2 Marks)
4 tickets (15 cents each) from Special Service USFET

3 receipts of postal orders ($25.00) ($55.00, $12.00)
1 postal order (65 cents)
1 article from newspaper concerning a missing plane.
2 letters
2 cards (commercial publicity)

B. Duty orders (triplicate)
C. Fishing and hunting license (Debovich)
D. 2 Tickets from billets (Hilton and Gilbert)
E. 2 Registered tickets from ATC (Elek & Deborich)
F. 4 different papers (torn out)
G. Burnt papers (Navigation Maps)
H. 4 maps

CLOTHES: 2 Field jackets (USA), 1 necktie, 1 short
1 shoe, 1 slipper, 1 moccassin.
1 piece of parachute material
1 piece of cloth used as signalization on life-raft.
1 piece of cloth
2 Urinals
1 sack containing rockets, rocket pistol.

MECHANICAL PIECES: 1 valve, 1 control assembly, 1 lubricator, 1 tap, 1 parachute release, 1 broken ring, 1 wing flap.

TOOLS: 1 slide rule.

PERSONAL OBJECTS: Pilot insignia, airborne badge, lighter, bell from Capri, 1 ring, fingernail clipper, glasses frame, fountain pen, cap of a fountain pen, camera and films, watch Rolex.

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VIII REGION MILITAIRE (Military Area)

RESTRICTED

108th 1/2 BRIGADE

99th B. I. A.

397th Bn.

STATEMENT OF THE BATTALION CHIEF CHALANDON
COMMANDING THE 99th B. I. A.

Probable way taken by the B-17G

Coming from NAPLES and going to LONDON, in passing through that area is a direct way. The plane struct at 3,700 meters, so it must have passed about the Col Du Mont-Cenis, avoiding the 2 big Mass of Grand-Paradis and Haute Tarentaise, East of La Vannoise at the West.

They certainly intended to pass at the West of the Mass du Mont-Blanc.

The plane hit the first high peak limiting that Mass at the South-West.

The weather was fairly cloudy on the day (See Weather statistics). Was the peak of the Mont Blanc (4807) meters clear and the surrounding summits cloudy? Such things happened very often. If so, we know the reason of the collision. The plane continued to fly in a straight line, flying close to the Mont-Blanc.

If the summit of the Aiguille de Glaciers was clear, the pilots would have seen it from very far, that mountain being like a black pyramid emerging from an enormous glacier.

The Conclusion is: A sudden deficiency of the plane, or a mistake in the piloting.

BOURG ST MAURICE, 16 August 1947
Chalandon, Jean Andre, Bn Chief
Commanding the 99th B. I. A.

DISTRIBUTION:
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The Colonel commanding the 108th 1/2 BRIGADE.
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108th 1/2 BRIGADE

99th B. I. A.

398th Bn.

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REPORT OF FINAL FINDINGS

The Battalion Chief CHALANDON commanding the 99th B. I. A. in accord with Lt Mollard commanding the S. E. S. of the Battalion and the American authorities present at Les Chapieux, decided to stop the searches for the bodies and documents in the area of L'Aiguille de Glaciers, on Saturday 9 August 1947.

The airplane was pulverized after hitting the mountain (O'Aiguille). The remains were spread all over the Glacier, the Glaciers and the Glacier of the Estelette. During the past they have been covered by 4 or 5 meters of snow, and now they are buried in the ice or at the bottom of crevasses.

Everything was done to find the remains, but the falling rocks, the fragile snow bridges, and the crevasses of the moving glaciers make the searches very perilous. Further searches would only bring very small results.

In a few years, and little by little, the glaciers will free the remains, at which time, this unit will gather them carefully, this area being our training ground in the mountains and this unit will notify American authorities concerned.

BOURG St. Maurice, 9 August 1947
CHALANDON, Battalion Chief
Commanding the 99th B. I. A.

S/ CHALANDON

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Les Chapieux, 28 July 1947

VIII MILITARY AREA
108th 1/2 BRIGADE
99th B. I. A.
S.E.S.
No 98

Lieutenant MOLLARD Neal, Commanding the SES
of the 99th B. I. A.

TO: The Battalion Chief, commanding the
99th B. I. A.

SUBJECT: American Plane Found at 3,750 meters Aiguille des Glaciers.

Submitted herewith are the following facts; On Friday 25 July 1947, the S.E.S. and I, were climbing the Aiguille des Glaciers (3,870 meters) on the South-East side of that mountain; and we found the remains of a plane at around 3,750 meters.

After ardous searches on the rocky side of L'Aiguille, it seemed that plane was:

1. An American plane
2. B-17, serial no. 9338
3. That it struck against the mountain (Oily spot on the slope of the mountain, and motor of the plane crushed into that slope).
4. Coming from Naples and going to London.
5. On 31 October 1946
6. Duty orders in my possession at Les Chapieux, Lt Mollard.
7. Duty orders signed by Lt Guy A. Vogt, by order of Colonel DANIEL
8. ESCHBORN- Germany

LT. MOLLARD, Commanding the S.E.S.
of the 99th B.I.A.

s/Mollard

A TRANSLATION OF ORIGINAL FRENCH FILE

RESTRICTED

Les Chapieux, 28 July 1947

VIII MILITARY AREA

108th 1/2 BRIGADE
99th B. I. A.
S.E.S
No 98 bis

RESTRICTED

Lieutenant MOLLARD, Commanding the S.E.S. of the 99 B.I.A.

TO: Battalion Chief, Commanding the 99th B.I.A.

Submitted herewith are the following facts:
It was exactly 10:ep hours when we saw a big green spot on the rocky slope of the Aiguille des Glaciers. At the same time the first crew of mountain climbers found some debris of a plane. There were more and more of these remains as we were getting closer to the green spot, which was the rest of the cockpit of a plane. Some clothes, papers, and other kinds of debris were spread on that rocky side of the mountain. We also found one skull, one hand, a part of an arm (from elbow to hand), (Some flesh was still on it). We gathered them in ahole in the rock, as it was impossible to take them down on that day, the walk down being difficult. The climbers had already left their bags on the way up (3,470) because we feared a big storm (thunder). Also we had climbed through the ardeous way instead of the usual path, that is how found the plane.

Included herewith are: Copy of list of personnel (No 1)
Copy of Operations Orders No 260 (No 2)
List of things found and in the possession of Lt. MOLLARD at the Les Chapieux (NO 3)
Map of plane where plane was found.
Map (50/000 Mt Blanc)

Duty orders show that there were a total of nine person aboard the plane: 2 Colonels, 1 Major, 1 Lieutenant 1 Lieutenant, and 4 sergeants.

Lieutenant MOLLARD

S/ MOLLARD

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THINGS FOUND:

1. 2 Jackets - one belonging to a Sergeant (Particular grade not mentioned)
   one belonging to another Sgt, with different badges:
   a. Transport Troop Carrier, Transport Command,
   b. 1 Badge of mechanician
   c. 3 Decorations.

   Jacket belonging to M/Sgt GILBERT, Serial number 6690531 (written inside of the jacket), Duty Orders, glasses (gold frame), ticket with his name written on it (Ing Slips for EM)

2. Other things:
   a. A ring with skull and 2 snakes.
   b. A silver bell from Capri "The luckly little bell of San Michell"
   c. One cap insignia (American Officer in the Air Corps)
   d. One collar pin.

3. Administrative flight No. 109: for the needs of the Headquarters.

Lieutenant Mollard

S/ Mollard

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No 104

Lieutenant MOLLARD commanding S.E.S.

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to

The Battalion Chief Commanding the 99th B.I.A.

SUBJECT: Location of American Plane.

Submitted herewith is a report of searches made under my supervision, to locate the American plane B-17. Searches were made especially to find bodies, personal objects, parts of plane and documents.

A. Departure on 1st August from the Chapieux at 0300 hours. Return at 1930 hours.

B. Crew Chiefs:
Lt. MOLLARD, 3 guides
Sgt BECK S, 3 guides
Cpl JORAT, 3 guides
Cpl POULENARD, 3 guides

C. Itinerary and places searched:
Col of the Seigne-Col 3010 (See map 1/50,000 Mt Blanc)
Glacier of the Glaciers-Rimay (upper)
3 couleirs meeting at around 3750 meters.
Replacement of the cockpit and motor of the plane.
Return through the three peaks leading to the glacier of the GLACIERS.
Main purpose of these searches was to find the bodies.

D. Searches made on all of the slope, 400 meters to the right, and the same to the left, 500 meters above and below to the upper rim (Glacier des Glaciers).

E. Things found: Fountain pen, watch (Relex), fingernail clipper, papers concerning the plane, duty orders, jacket of Sgt GILBERT. Remains, man's head, part of a shoulder, part of one arm (from elbow to hand). These remains are actually at Les Chapieux (Chapel)

s/ Mollard

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A TRANSLATION OF ORIGINAL FRENCH FILE

Les Chapieux, 4 August 1947

VIII MILITARY AREA
108th 1/2 BRIGADE
99th B. I. A.
S.E.S.

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Lt. MOLLARD Neal, Commanding the S.E.S.
of the 99th B. I. A.

TO: The Battalion Chief, Commanding the
99th Battalion d'Infantrie Alpine.

Submitted herewith is the report of the searches made on 4 August 1947 on the glacier of the Estellette and in the rocky couloir which goes up to 3,730 meters.

Two Crews: 1 - Lt Mollard, Mr Geno from the American Mission, and 2 guildes.
2 - Sgt Bois and 2 guides.

Schedule: Departure from Les Chapieux at 0300 hours. Return to Les Chapieux at 1700.

Itinerary: Les Chapieux, Seloge, Col de la Seigna (2,736 meters), Glacier of the Estellete.

a. Things found: On the all glacier we found debris of plane motor, propeller and life-raft. At the peak of the glacier of the Estellettes we found some more remains of plane. Inside of the Rimay (upper), 7 meters inside and in the ice, we found some more parts (from the coast 3,730 to 1 kilometer and a half to the point of wreckage (3,730). The Glacier of Estellette is covered by parts, the biggest part has the size of a human head.

b. We found the wallet of T/Sgt Cassel, inside were an identification card, different papers and $250.00, a pad with code-words, a camera with films, navigation maps, a rocket-pistol, and other different things as shoes. Also we found remains as 2 feet, the lower part of a leg, bones and little bits of flesh.

c. Places searched: All of the glacier of the Estellette (very dangerous glacier with very deep crevasses, snow bridges (more than 30 meters long), all of the couloir at the peak of the glacier to 3,730 meters).

d. More searches will be made Thursday and Friday 7 and 8 August 1947. The purpose of the searches will be to bring down the other parts of the plane, and remains if there are any left.

e. Conclusion: In my opinion there is nothing else to be found at the place of wreckage, as the plane bursted. The rest of the plane and bodies are now inside of the glacier of the Estellette under 15 to 30 meters of ice. Those remains will be found before thirty years from now, after the glacier will have normally melted, they will be then at the Rimay (lower). We met great difficulties, because of the rock slope and also because of the glaciers (Glacier des Glaciers), especially the glacier of the Estellette.

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In fact, these glaciers have enormous crevasses in summer time (this summ er is particularly warm), they are more than 30 meters wide and from 30 to 100 meters deep. Snow bridges are very weak, and there are very few of them.

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The crew and myself almost fell in a deep crevasse, more than 50 meters deep.

The rocky couloirs are also very dangerous, because of the falling rocks.

See Map 1/50,000 Mont-Blanc.

s/Mollard

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