File No:
FF4-1/A25

Serial No:
80/

COMMANDER AIR FORCE
UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET

U. S. Naval Air Station,
San Diego, California
22 MAR 1955

3981

FIFTH ENDORSEMENT on VA-125 AAR ser 1-55 of 11 February 1955 concerning AD-6 BuNo 135363, accident occurring 31 January 1955, Pilot NORRIS

From: Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-57)
Via: Officer in Charge, U.S. Naval Aviation Safety Activity

Subj: VA-125 aircraft accident occurring 31 January 1955

(b) (5)

[redacted]

J. Sinkankas

J. SINKANKAS
By direction

Copy to:
BUAER (2)
CINCPACFLT (COMPLETE)
COMCARAIRGRU-12
CO, VA-125
CO, FAGUPAC
BAR, EL SEGUNDO

ORIGINAL

A25

FAGU/A25
(JEM:clr)
Ser: 163

18 MAR 1955

FOURTH ENDORSEMENT on VA-125 AAR ser 1-55 of 11 FEB 55 concerning AD-6
BuNo 125636, accident occurring 31 JAN 55, Pilot: NORRIS

From: Commanding Officer, Fleet Air Gunnery Unit, Pacific
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-57)
Via: (1) Commander Air Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet
(2) U. S. Naval Aviation Safety Activity

Subj: VA-125 Aircraft accident occurring 31 JAN 55

(b) (5)

[redacted]

D. S. CROCKETT

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NAVAVSAFACT
COMCARAIRGRU-12
CO, VA-125
BAR, EL SEGUNDO

2

9235

ORIGINAL

File No:
FF4-1/A25

Serial No:
80/

COMMANDER AIR FORCE
UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET

3382

U. S. Naval Air Station,
San Diego, California.
10 MAR 1955

THIRD ENDORSEMENT on VA-125 AAR ser 1-55 of 11 February 1955 concerning AD-6 BuNo 135636, accident occurring 31 January 1955, Pilot NORRIS

From: Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet
To: Commanding Officer, Fleet Air Gunnery Unit, Pacific

Subj: VA-125 aircraft accident occurring 31 January 1955

(b) (5)

[redacted]

M. F. YEAGER
By Direction

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NAVAVSAFACT
COMCARAIRGRU-12
CO, VA-125
BAR, EL SEGUNDO

3

ORIGINAL

CVG-12/A25
GAR:vac
Ser: 33
21 FEB 1955

SECOND ENDORSEMENT on VA-125 AAR ser 1-55 concerning AD-6, BuNo. 135363, pilot MORRIS

From: Commander, Carrier Air Group TWELVE
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-57)
Via: (1) Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet
(2) U.S. Naval Aviation Safety Activity

Subj: VA-125 Accident occurring 31 January 1955

(b) (5)

[redacted]

C N Conatser

C. N. CONATSER

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CINCPACFLT
NAVAVSAFACT
COMAIRPAC
NAR EL SEGUNDO
CO, VA-125

4

ORIGINAL

6012

BEH:flc
VA125/A25
Ser: 72-55
11 February 1955

ORIGINAL

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on VA-125 AAR ser 1-55 concerning AD-6, 135363, accident occurring 31 January 1955, pilot NORRIS

From: Commanding Officer, Attack Squadron ONE TWENTY-FIVE
To. Chief of Naval Operations (OP-57)
Via: (1) Commander, Carrier Air Group TWELVE
(2) Commander Air Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet
(3) U. S. Naval Aviation Safety Activity, Norfolk, Va.

Subj: VA-125 Accident occurring 31 January 1955

(b) (5)

[redacted]

B. E. HACKETT

Copy to:
BUAER
COMAIRPAC
NAVSAFACT, NORVA
RAR EL SEGUNDO

ORIGINAL

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT REPORT

OPNAV FORM 3750-1 (REV. 3-52)

PAGE 1 OF ____ PAGES

OPNAV REPORT 3750

THE AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT BOARD SHALL SUBMIT THIS REPORT TO THE C.O. OF THE ACTIVITY CONDUCTING THE INVESTIGATION. IT SHALL THEN BE FORWARDED BY THE C.O. IN ACCORDANCE WITH CURRENT AAR INSTRUCTION

DATE OF ACCIDENT	HOUR	2. ACTIVITY SUBMITTING REPORT	3. AAR SERIAL NO.
31 January 1954	0895U	Attack Squadron 125	1-55

4. MODEL A/C	BUNO.	CHECK DAMAGE TO A/C	5. REPORTING CUSTODIAN OF A/C
AD-6	135363	[X] A [ ] B [ ] C [ ] D [ ] E	Attack Squadron 125

6. NAME OF UNIT OPERATING THE A/C	BASED AT	OPERATIONAL CHAIN OF COMMAND
Attack Squadron 125	Temporarily Based At NAAS El Centro, Calif.	CAG-12/ COMAIRPAC

7. LOCATION OF ACCIDENT	8. UNIT TO WHICH OPERATOR ATTACHED
Target 103, 15 Miles West of NAAS, El Centro, California	Attack Squadron 125

9. PERSONNEL INVOLVED (Including name and injury code of those injured, not occupants of A/C)

A FULL NAME, RANK, SERVICE, FILE No. (List persons in control first)	B AGE	C BILLET	D POSITION	E INJURY
Franklin S. Norris, LT/C., USN, Gr. 1 [redacted] (b) (6) 1310	23	Pilot	Cockpit	A

PILOT EXPERIENCE	TOTAL ALL MODELS	TOTAL THIS MODEL	LAST 12 MONTHS ALL MODELS	LAST 3 MONTHS ALL MODELS	LAST 3 MONTHS THIS MODEL	INSTRUMENT RATE Standard/No/N
TOTAL HOURS	382.5	62	136.9	55.9	55.9	PILOT'S AGE
INSTRUMENT HOURS			61.7	8.4	8.4	23
NIGHT HOURS			22.9	0	0	DATE DESIGNATED
NV LANDINGS DAY/NITE	6	- - - - -	6	0	0	8-20-54

10. CHECK IF: [X] INCIDENT TO FLIGHT [X] NOT INCIDENT TO FLIGHT

11. PURPOSE OF FLIGHT	CODE	13. TIME IN FLIGHT
High Altitude Dive Bomb	1A77	0-40

TYPE OF ACCIDENT	CODE	15. MANEUVER INVOLVED
Collision - Ground	B	70° Dive Bombing Run From 20,000 Feet

WEATHER	CEILING	VISIBILITY	17. DARKNESS?	18. CLEARANCE ISSUED
[X] VFR [ ] IFR	Unlimited	40 Miles	[ ] YES [X] NO	Local VFR

WIND DIRECTION	FORCE	20. ATTITUDE ON IMPACT	ANGLE OF IMPACT	STOPPING DISTANCE	SPEED ON IMPACT	21. DID FIRE FOLLOW IMPACT?
260	6-10Kt	Inverted	50°	8 Ft.	Approx. 35	[X] YES [ ] NO

22. AIRCRAFT AND ENGINE DATA (Fill in all data in every case of material failure of malfunction, actual or suspected)

HISTORY	SERVICE TOUR	MONTHS IN THIS TOUR	TOTAL NUMBER OF OVERHAULS	FLT HOURS SINCE OVERHAUL	FLT HOURS SINCE ACCEPTANCE by Navy	TYPE OF CHECK LIST PERFORMED	FLT HOURS SINCE CHECK	NO. DAYS SINCE CHECK
AIRCRAFT	1	3	0	New	129.3	1st Major	13.6	6
	MODEL ENGINE	SERIAL NO OF ENGINE						
ENGINE 1	R3350-26WA	C-591363	0	New	142.1	1st Major	13.6	6
ENGINE 2								
ENGINE 3								
ENGINE 4								

23. HAS THIS A/C BEEN DAMAGED IN PREVIOUS INCIDENT(S) DURING PRESENT SERVICE TOUR [ ] YES [X] NO — IF "YES", GIVE DATE (S) OF PREVIOUS ACCIDENT(S) — RUDM SERIAL NUMBER ON THIS ACCIDENT, IF SUBMITTED

24. CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS (Check or fill in only one primary "P" factor, all others secondary "S")

[redacted] (b) (5)

25. CHECK CONDITIONS INVOLVED IN THIS ACCIDENT (List other)
[ ] X-WIND, STACKWASH, SLIPSTREAM, TURBULENCE [ ] PITCHING OR ROLLING DECK [X] COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTY [ ] AIRPORT HAZARD [ ] ROUGH SEAS [ ] TERRAIN CONDITION

26. EMERGENCY CONDITIONS
[ ] IMMEDIATE FORCED LANDING [ ] PRECAUTIONARY LANDING [ ] ENGINE FAILURE [ ] FUEL EXHAUSTION OR NEAR EXHAUSTION

27. PERSONNEL SAFETY EQUIPMENT USED
[ ] PARACHUTE [ ] EJECTION SEAT [X] SHOULDER HARNESS [X] SAFETY BELT [ ] EXPOSURE SUIT [X] G-SUIT [X] PROTECTIVE HELMET [X] OXYGEN EQUIP.
[ ] LIST OTHERS Suit, Summer Flying, Gloves Mk-2 Life Vest — MEDICAL OFFICER REPORT SERIAL NO. 1-55

28. ENCLOSURES AND DISTRIBUTION CHECK OFF LIST.

CHECK	ENCLOSURES	CHECK	No.	DISTRIBUTION BY COMMANDING OFF.
	STATEMENTS: PILOT	X	ORIG	CNO ~~SDPER~~ VIA CHN. OF COMD. OP-57
	LSO		2cc	NAVAVSAFACT DIRECT
	ENG. OFF.		3cc	BUAER DIRECT
	CAT. OFF.			CHECK AND LIST OTHERS AS REQUIRED
X	WITNESSES		1cc	BAR EL SEGUNDO
X	OTHERS		1cc	CAG-12
X	PHOTOGRAPHS		1cc	COMAIRPAC
	DRAWINGS		1cc	[redacted]
	WEATHER REPORT		1cc	NAVAVSAFACT
	LOADING MANIFEST		2cc	FILE

29. SIGNATURES OF BOARD MEMBERS [redacted] (b) (6)

ORIGINAL

SUBMITTED TO C.O. Feb. 55

29. THE ACCIDENT

On 31 January 1955 at approximately 0835U, LTJG. Francis S. Norris, (b) (6) 1310, USN, was airborne in AD-6 BuNo 135363 in company of 4 other AD-6 aircraft on a routine high altitude, dive bombing flight from NAAS El Centro, El Centro, California. At approximately 0834, 40 minutes after being airborne, Norris commenced his dive from 20,000 feet at an angle of 68°, [illegible] plane in a flight of five. The 68° dive is assumed [illegible], from 20,000 feet to 13,000 feet of altitude due to the fact that a bomb was released missing the target by 600 feet at 6 O'clock. [illegible] target control tower operator (only available witness), saw no apparent [illegible] to pull out at 13,000 feet as is customary. At 8,000 or 9,000 feet [illegible] target controller called to him numerous times on the radio to pull out. [illegible] there was no apparent effort made to pull out. At an estimated 15[illegible] a parachute was observed to come out of the plane, snag [illegible] shifted down. A second later, what was presumed to have been the [illegible] seen leaving the aircraft. The plane then rolled left [illegible] inverted position and crashed at angle of about 50°, wings level, [illegible] feet from the target at about the 1030 position to [illegible] bomb-line. The pilot's body was 750 feet from the point of impact of the aircraft and slightly to the right of the probable flight path of the aircraft. The parachute harness plus about 10 feet of parachute shrouds were found attached to the pilot. The pilot's body was returned to NAAS El Centro at 0945U, 31 January 1955. Salvage was commenced at 0800, 1 February and secured at 1500, 1 February 1955.

30. DAMAGE TO THE AIRCRAFT

The aircraft struck the ground at an angle of about 50° inverted. It exploded and disintegrated on impact with the largest piece of fuselage being a dive brake. The wreckage was scattered ahead in a fan shaped pattern for 250 feet. A hol[illegible] feet deep with a 3 foot mound pushed up at the back, was dug. The ma[illegible] of the engine were embedded in the back side. An imprint [illegible] feet long, was made across the hole which was 38 foot fore an[illegible] all parts of the fuselage accessories and some engine parts were scatter[illegible]rd of the point of impact.

The [illegible]ge was removed to NAAS El Centro for possible salvage.

31. THE [illegible]GATION

(b) (5)

[redacted]

32. THE ANALYSIS

(b) (5)

[redacted]

33. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(b) (5)

[redacted]

Report from NAVAL PARACHUTE UNIT to Aircraft Accident Board.

From: Officer-in-Charge, Naval Parachute Unit
To: Commanding Officer

4650-275
F15-7/MGB;mmf
Serial: 85
2 FEB 1955

Subj: Examination of parachute worn by pilot involved in fatal accident on 31 JAN 1955

1. On 1 FEB 1955 the subject 28 ft. quick-fit seat type parachute assembly was examined by personnel of this activity.

2. The following observations were made:

a. The pilot parachute was missing.

b. The canopy was damaged extensively.

c. Canopy damage consisted of (1) numerous "friction burns" (fused areas) caused by contact at high speed with the structure of the aircraft, and (2) general structural failure. Friction damage was evidenced in numerous places by discoloration and hardened (fused) nylon. The structural failure was typified by areas of missing cloth, radial seams ripped free from the lines at the skirt, and cloth ruptures through-out the canopy.

d. All suspension lines were broken between the skirt of the canopy and the harness. Several lines showed discoloration from contact with the aircraft.

e. The parachute harness was undamaged.

3. The following conclusions are presented:

a. The pilot was probably still in the cockpit when the ripcord was pulled.

b. The canopy probably deployed under the horizontal tail where grease from the tail hook could be rubbed off on canopy and lines.

c. The pilot may have been impinged on something in the cockpit when the parachute opened, or he may have passed over the top of the horizontal stabilizer and his parachute fouled around it.

4650-275
F15-7/WCB:mmf
Serial: 85
2 Feb 1955

d. The damage to the canopy was so severe that it would have collapsed even had the lines not been severed.

e. The lines were severed through contact with the aircraft; the most probable points of contact were the stabilizers or tail hook.

William H. SHOCKEY

R. A. BOSEE,
By direction

Copy to:
SHO, NAAS, El Centro

11

Enclosure (1)

WITNESS STATEMENT CONCERNING FATAL ACCIDENT INVOLVING AD-6 BuNo. 135363

(b) (5)

[redacted]

H. S. Herrick

H. S. HERRICK, LCDR, USN

ENCLOSURE (2)

WITNESS STATEMENT CONCERNING FATAL ACCIDENT INVOLVING AD-6 BUNO 135363

(b) (5)

[redacted]

James M. Drysdale
JAMES M. DRYSDALE

Enclosure (3)

WITNESS STATEMENT CONCERNING FATAL ACCIDENT INVOLVING AD-6 BUNO 135363

(b) (5)

[redacted]

R. E. HUDSON
AM CREW LEADER

Enclosure (4)

WITNESS STATEMENT CONCERNING FATAL ACCIDENT INVOLVING AD-6 BUNO 135363

(b) (5)

[redacted]

Doyle L. Richardson

DOYLE L. RICHARDSON

Enclosure (5)

WITNESS STATEMENT CONCERNING FATAL ACCIDENT INVOLVING AD-6 BUNO 135363

(b) (5)

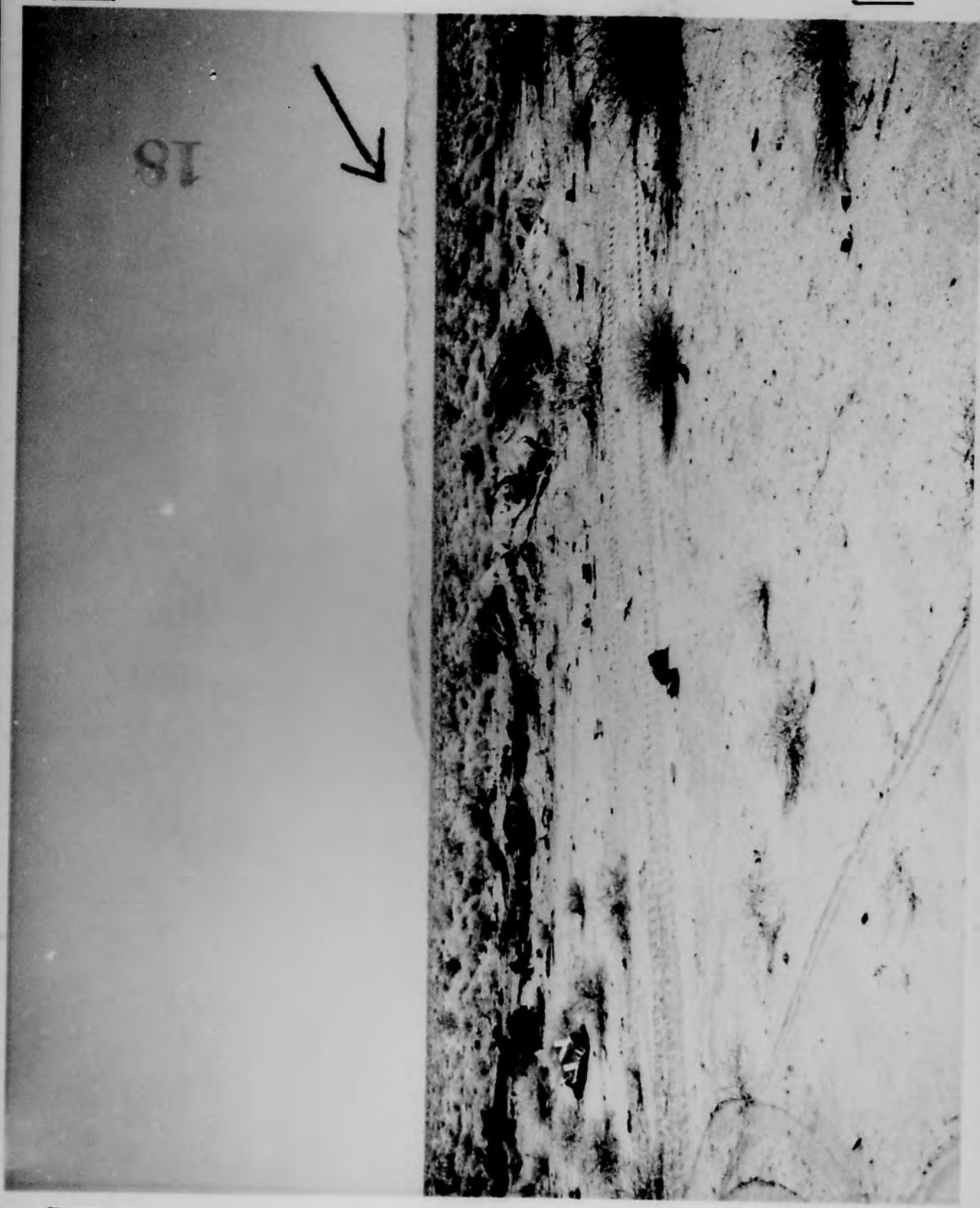
[redacted]

Francis T. Gianino
FRANCIS T. GIANINO

Enclosure (6)

TARGET 103 LOOKING SOUTH TO NORTH SHOWING POSITION OF CRASH, (1), PILOTS BODY (2), PARARAFT (3), AND PARACHUTE CANOPY (4)

ENCLOSURE (7)



POINT OF INITIAL IMPACT SHOWING DIRECTION OF FLIGHT

ENCLOSURE (8)

POINT OF IMPACT LOOKING OPPOSITE LINE OF FLIGHT

ENGLISHING (9)

PARACHUTE CANOPY SHOWING NUMEROUS RIPS AND HOLES

ENCLOSURE (11)