

This document consists of 2 pages  
No. 2 B

The files

January 22, 1968

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Assistant Director for Production & Safety

B52 ACCIDENT 1/21/68, 1540 EST

107146

MA:PR:EGS

About 1630 EST I received a call from Major Henry, National Military Command Center (NMCC) that at 1540 EST a B52 had gone down 7 3/4 miles out of the Thule AFB. Before the plane crashed, the navigator reported a fire at his position. Major Henry advised that the plane was "loaded". He did not know whether it was down over water or land. He had no other information at the time other than that an emergency team was being dispatched from Offutt AFB. The team was headed by Major General Hunziker. The incident was reported to the Deputy Director of DMA at about 1650 and Duty Officer, Operational Safety.

At 1705 I discussed the incident with Mr. Hancock in ALO. At that time they had received no notice. Mr. Hancock alerted his safety people, Sandia Corp., and LASL (assuming that LASL weapons were on board). At 1816 Mr. Hancock called back with additional information. The B52 was on a regular flight out of Plattsburgh, N.Y.

There was a fire on board the plane and the plane was attempting an emergency landing at the Thule AFB. It was reported that all seven crewmen ejected and two survivors had been picked up. The fire was clearly visible from the Thule AFB control tower. DNS had requested that ALO send observers with the DNS people and DNS was making arrangements for a jet aircraft from Norton AFB, Calif., to pick up Albuquerque people and proceed to the scene of the accident. This information was reported to the Deputy Director of DMA at 1825 and it was agreed that ALO should send representatives to the accident scene.

Deputy Director of DMA then reported the accident to the General Manager, Public Information, the Commissioners, and Executive Secretary of the Joint Committee staff. I advised Mr. Hancock to plan to send AEC representatives.

At 2100 Mr. Hancock called back with some additional information. The jet aircraft was supposed to leave Norton at approximately that time and come to Albuquerque to pick up DNS people, the DASA NET team

1063

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Thule Incident

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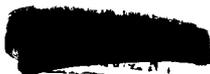
and the AEC team. It would then proceed to San Antonio to pick up NET teams equipment and other special gear and fly directly from there to Thule, expecting to arrive about daylight this morning. The AEC team members are: LASL - John Kinker; SC - Roy Lambert; ALO - Paul Smith.

Mr. Hancock also reported at that time that information he had received through DNS and DASA indicated that there had been a helicopter overflight of the crash scene. The plane went in on an ice cake about 7 feet thick. There was no report of any explosion but the fire was very intense and there were large smoke billows. By the time the helicopter flew over the scene, only small pieces of the aircraft could be seen and it appeared that the spot was icing over. It may be assumed that the aircraft sank. If this is the case, it is believed to be in 100 to 200 feet of water. In reporting this information to the Deputy Director of DMA he had received information that five of the seven crew members had been picked up. Their condition is unknown. We as yet have no written report from anyone concerning this accident but will work with Headquarters, U. S. Air Force this morning to see what additional information may be available and to make any corrections to the above as necessary.

Distribution:

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67