

Dakota 966 1944.07.18

On the 18<sup>th</sup> July 1944 Dakota 966 from 165 Squadron at Sea Island, now 435 (T&R) Squadron in Winnipeg, was scheduled for a special transportation flight to pick up an aircraft engine at Annette Island Alaska. It was also to take passengers and freight to Port Hardy and Masset. Weather on departure from Sea Island was ceiling 800' visibility 2 miles and wind from the NW at 4 mph. The captain, F/L Daniels, had flown 2325:10 hrs and had 567:35 hours on Daks and was considered the most experienced and most careful transport pilot on the squadron. The second officer F/O Curtis was a new copilot with 9 hours on the squadron. He was considered quick thinking and keen.

At 8:30 F/L Daniels with a crew of three and fourteen passengers took off from Sea Island and arrived at Port Hardy at 10:15. They had to circle for about ½ hour before the fog lifted enough to land. Four passengers left the a/c and it was refueled by 11:00. The aircraft was on the ground half an hour so the controls were not locked. Dak 966 was at its all up weight of 27,681 when F/L Daniels took off at 11:15. The weather on departure was 800' broken and six miles, wind was from the NE at 4 mph with a low fog bank two miles to the North. Conditions were improving.

Shortly after becoming airborne off runway 07 (1837') at approx 30' the port wing dipped, it straightened out then dipped again to 30° and the aircraft started to turn port and was climbing slowly. Dak 966 had reached 75' with the gear still down and the flaps up when it struck the trees off the North side of the junction of 07/10. Approximately 15' of the starboard wing was torn off by the trees and the aircraft cartwheeled starboard and the port engine burst into flame. The aircraft came to rest in a partially cleared area just off the intersection pointing approximately 140°.

Crews from the Station as well as Capt RI Salter and Capt FL Clarke from a Canadian Pacific Airlines flight that just landed assisted the injured. The injured were taken to the hospital at RCAF Station Coal Harbour for emergency treatment.

The investigation revealed that it did not appear that there was any problem with the engines and that the load was properly placed and lashed down at Sea Island. There is the possibility that the auto pilot was engaged on takeoff. As well it appears that most of the passengers were not wearing their seat belts on takeoff.

Six were killed, four seriously injured and four slightly injured.

**F/L Theron E Daniels Pilot, (Captain), C3817 Gardena, California, USA – KIA**

**F/O Bill J Curtiss, pilot (Copilot) J22337 Vancouver, BC – KIA**

**WO1 Lorne C Rideout WAG, R87913, Vancouver, BC – KIA**

**F/S James H Pigdon, AEM, R10428, Burnaby, BC – Slightly Injured**

**Sgt Ernest J Hillard, Crewman, R52914, Toronto, Ont – Seriously Injured**

**Passengers:**

**LCol Charles W Steele, Can Dental Corps, – Killed**

**F/L Wallace D Stroud, C3237, Sgt Claremont D Kippan, R10684, – Killed**

**Cpl O Nora Perry W307449, – Seriously injured**

**Chief Skipper Joseph M Olsen RCNR, – Seriously injured**

**LAW Grace E Dalton, W314716, – Seriously injured**

**F/S Samuel Jurmain R80711, – Slightly injured**

**LAC Charles H Wallace, R193990, – Slightly injured**

**LAW Billie M Hartley, W314712, – Slightly injured**

**Crash Location**

50°40'51.04"N 127°21'32.51"W

**Cairn Location**

50°40'59.69"N 127°22'35.98"W