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MARINE ATTACK SQUADRON 251
MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP 15
Aircraft, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific
Marine Corps Air Station
El Toro (Santa Ana), California

T Y P E " B " R E P O R T (C O M M A N D D I A R Y)
PERIOD OF 1 APRIL THROUGH 30 APRIL 1952

ENCLOSURE (1)

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Marine Attack Squadron 251 was located at the U. S. Marine Corps Air Station El Toro (Santa Ana), California. The commanding officer from 1 April through 28 April 1952 was Lieutenant Colonel Arthur M. LORAN 08610/7302, U. S. Marine Corps. On 28 April 1952 Major C. E. MOORE 09418/7302, U. S. Marine Corps assumed the duties of commanding officer, by reason of the Colonel's going on furlough. This squadron was a unit of Marine Aircraft Group 15 from 1 April through 30 April 1952. During the period covered by this report, 1 April through 30 April 1952, Marine Attack Squadron 251 conducted routine assignment of personnel, on the job training, and basic training in order to accomplish the missions assigned.

The missions of this squadron are:

- a. The primary missions of a Marine Attack Squadron are to conduct flight operations in support of the Fleet Marine Force and Naval Forces afloat in amphibious operations.
- b. The secondary missions of a Marine Attack Squadron are to augment or replace Naval air units aboard aircraft carriers and to provide air defense of advanced Naval bases.

The tasks assigned are:

- a. Must be able to provide adequate close air support through ability to deliver:
 - (1) Accurate dive bombing attacks;
 - (2) Accurate glide bombing attacks;
 - (3) Accurate strafing attacks;
- b. Must be prepared to provide adequate air defense by ability to intercept and destroy all attacking enemy aircraft.

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- c. Must be prepared to assist in defending against enemy surface attack.
- d. Must be prepared to operate from either a land base or a carrier base.
- e. Must be prepared to support offensive action as follows:
 - (1) Deliver coordinated attacks against ships and land targets;
 - (2) Deliver attacks against the enemy air force;
- f. Must be prepared to provide anti-submarine defense as directed.
- g. Must be prepared to provide spotting for Naval gunfire and shore artillery as directed.
- h. Must be prepared to furnish visual aerial reconnaissance.

On 6 April this squadron deployed to NAAS El Centro, leaving behind at MCAS, El Toro a rear echelon of 1 officer and 25 enlisted men.

On 10 April AL-17 (81151) piloted by 2ndLt. D. R. ANNAND 054592/7301, crashed near NAAS, El Centro. Strike damage was suffered by the aircraft and the pilot was seriously injured. (See appendix 3)

On 18 April this squadron redeployed to MCAS, El Toro from NAAS, El Centro.

On 2nd April, LtCol. A. M. MORAN 08610/7302 went on leave. Major C. H. MOORE 09418/7302 assumed the duties of Commanding Officer.

During the month of April 1952, Naval aviators assigned to this squadron participated in a total of six hundred and sixty-seven (667) hours of flight for a total of four hundred and fifteen (415) sorties.

(See appendix 2)

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At the end of the period covered by this report, the personnel strength of Marine Attack Squadron 251 was forty two (42) officers and one hundred and fifty three (153) enlisted men. (See appendix 2)

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CHRONOLOGICAL NARRATIVE

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Activities of Marine Attack Squadron 251 for the period of 1 April through 30 April 1952.

1 April 1952

18 sorties of routine ordnance, instrument and night section tactics flown for a total of 34.2 hours. Pilot ground training consisted of physical training and recognition.

2 April 1952

No flying this date. Basic training for enlisted men - 1 hour close order drill w/arms. Pilot ground training consisted of a 1 hour lecture on aircraft engineering.

3 April 1952

Routine pilot ground training on close air support. Two (2) sorties were flown for a total of 1.3 hours.

4 April 1952

Routine operations, two (2) sorties were flown for a total of 1.8 hours. Aircraft 81191 transferred to San Diego. Basic training for enlisted men was close order drill w/arms. Pilots had 1 hour of physical training.

5 April 1952

No flying scheduled this date. Holiday routine.

6 April 1952

Squadron deployment to NAAS El Centro via air lift. Rear echelon of 1 officer and approximately 25 enlisted men left behind. Eighteen (18) sorties were flown for a total of 27.5 hours.

7 April 1952

Night and day flying (bombs and rockets). Eighteen (18) sorties were flown for a total of 29.8 hours.

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8 April 1952

Night and day flying (bombs and rockets) 32 sorties were flown for a total of 49.8 hours.

9 April 1952

Night and day flying (bombs and rockets), 43 sorties were flown for a total of 65.8 hours.

10 April 1952

Night and day flying (bombs and rockets), 26 sorties were flown for a total of 37.8 hours. At 0728, Second Lieutenant D. R. ANNAND took off in AL-17 (81151) from NAAS, El Centro, as a member of a five (5) plane strafing flight. At approximately 0729 Lieutenant ANNAND made a forced landing approximately three fourths 3/4 of a mile southwest of service runway 21, NAAS, El Centro, California. The accident occurred immediately after take-off when the aircraft crash landed as a result of engine failure. The aircraft suffered strike damage and the pilot was seriously injured.

11 April 1952

Night and day flying, (bombs and rockets), 19 sorties were flown for a total of 25.2 hours.

12 April 1952

Night and day flying, (bombs and rockets), 15 sorties were flown for a total of 32.6 hours.

13 April 1952

Holiday routine. 12 cross country sorties flown for a total of 38.0 hours.

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14 April 1952

Night and day flying (bombs and rockets). 25 sorties flown for a total of 36.5 hours.

15 April 1952

Night and day flying (bombs and rockets). 20 sorties were flown for a total of 31.5 hours.

16 April 1952

Day and night flying (bombs and rockets). NAAS, El Centro, 20 sorties were flown for a total of 30.4 hours.

17 April 1952

Day and night flying (bombs and rockets). NAAS, El Centro, 36 sorties were flown for a total of 41.6 hours.

18 April 1952

Day and night flying (rockets, bombs and cross country). Deployment from NAAS, El Centro to MCAS, El Toro. 28 sorties were flown for a total of 38.6 hours.

19 April 1952

No flying scheduled for this date.

20 April 1952

Holiday routine

21 April 1952

No flying scheduled. 1 hour close order drill w/arms, 1 hour technical training and 1 hour lecture on drill and formations for enlisted men. Pilot ground training included 1 hour of physical training and 1 hour lecture on Aviation Equipment

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22 April 1952

Flying was confined to sorties (close air support), on a Camp Pendleton exercise. 18 sorties were flown for a total of 30.8 hours. Pilot ground training consisted of a 1 hour lecture on recognition. Aircraft 96959 transferred to San Diego.

23 April 1952

Flying was confined to sorties, (close air support) on a Camp Pendleton exercise. 6 sorties were flown for a total of 9.9 hours. Pilot ground training consisted of 1 hour on aircraft engineering.

24 April 1952

Flying consisted of test, division tactics and instrument hops. 10 sorties were flown for a total of 16.2 hours. Two hours were devoted to pilot ground training on the subjects of physical training and instruments.

25 April 1952

7 sorties (division tactics) were flown for a total of 9.4 hours. Aircraft 81343, 81831, and 82058 were transferred to San Diego.

26 April 1952

5 Cross country sorties were flown for a total of 13.7 hours. Basic training for the enlisted men was on basic military subjects. Pilot ground training was confined to physical training.

27 April 1952

3 cross country sorties were flown for a total of 9.1 hours.

28 April 1952

LtCol. A. M. MORAN 08610/7302, commanding VMA-251, left on furlough.

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28 April 1952 (cont'd)

Major C. H. MOORE 09418/7302, assumed command of the squadron. 1 test hop and 3 cross country sorties were flown for a total of 4.8 hours. Basic training for enlisted men consisted of 1 hour of close order drill, and a 1 hour lecture on world affairs. Pilot ground training was devoted to aircraft engineering.

29 April 1952

13 sorties of familiarization, tactical and instrument nature were flown for a total of 23.3 hours. Aircraft 81310 transferred to San Diego. Pilot ground training was devoted to physical training.

30 April 1952

15 sorties consistion of Bombing, rockets, and strafing, familiarization and instruments were flown for a total of 27.1 hours. Pilot ground training was devoted to ordnance lectures.

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FIRST ENDORSEMENT on VMA-251 Aircraft Accident Report 2-52

From: Commanding Officer, Marine Attack Squadron 251
To: U. S. Naval Aviation Safety Activity
Via: (1) Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 15
(2) Commanding General, Aircraft, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific

Subj: Aircraft Accident Report 2-52

1. Forwarded concurring with the findings of the board,

A. M. MORAN

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THE ACCOUNT

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29. THE ACCIDENT

At 0728 10 April 1952, Lieutenant Annand took off from NAAS El Centro, as a member of a five (5) plane strafing flight. At approximately 0729 Lieutenant Annand made a forced landing approximately three fourths (3/4) of a mile southwest of service runway 21, NAAS El Centro, California. The accident occurred immediately after take-off when the aircraft crash landed as a result of engine failure.

30. DAMAGE TO THE AIRCRAFT

The aircraft suffered strike damage in the accident. The sequence of the damage appeared to be as follows: After engine failure at approximately one hundred and fifty (150) feet, the aircraft made contact with the ground straight ahead in what appeared to be a very nose high, full stalled flight attitude. On initial impact the estimated speed of the aircraft was seventy-five (75) to eighty (80) knots. At this point the fuselage broke in half at the cockpit just forward of the pilots seat and armor plate.

The tail section, with the pilot, then flew through the air making one (1) summersault flip, coming to rest approximately one hundred and fifty (150) feet from the point of initial impact, facing in the opposite direction.

The forward section, with the wings and engine, made one (1) complete flip, coming to rest on the propeller with the left wing broken off at the wing root. The forward part of the fuselage and the aft part of the fuselage were twenty-five (25) feet apart on final rest.

31. THE INVESTIGATION

The investigation revealed the following facts and findings:
The ceiling was estimated to be eighteen thousand feet (18,000'), broken, visibility fifteen (15) miles, wind twenty-five (25) knots from two seven zero (270°), runway was dry.

At approximately 0729 on 10 April 1952, Second Lieutenant Douglass R. Annand took off as number five (5) man of a five (5) plane flight from NAAS El Centro, California. At approximately 0730, Lieutenant Annand's plane crashed in an open field approximately three fourths (3/4) of a mile from the end of service runway 21.

Statements of witnesses revealed that the aircraft was trailing smoke immediately after take-off, and that the engine quit after the landing gear had been fully retracted at an altitude of approximately one hundred and fifty (150) feet. Witnesses further revealed that after take-off the aircraft was seen to make a slight left turn at which time the engine quit, and at this point the nose appeared to drop slightly,

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followed by a slight turn to the right. The aircraft was then seen to mush into an open field approximately three fourths (3/4) of a mile from the end of the service runway. The aircraft was then seen to brake in half at station one eight six (186), with the tail section doing a flip over the front section of the aircraft.

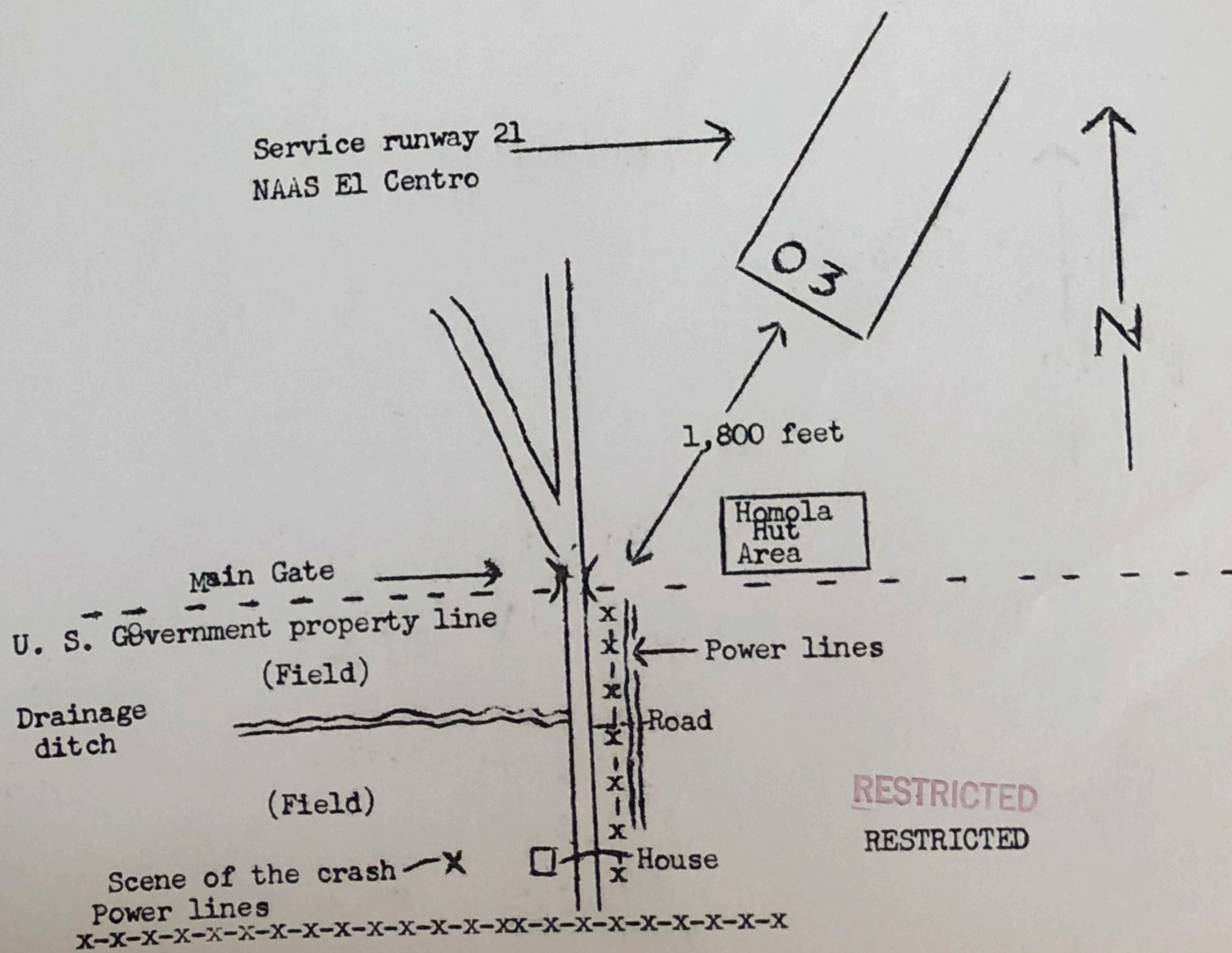
After the accident Lieutenant Annand was found in the tail section, strapped to the seat with the safety belt and shoulder harness as revealed in enclosure (9).

The accident board, in its investigation at the scene of the accident, determined that the aircraft traveled one hundred and fifty (150) feet from the point of impact before coming to rest.

Two (2) flights prior to the accident this aircraft returned to the base with a deferred emergency, due to a rough running engine. Subsequent investigation on the ground and a thirty (30) minute test flight revealed no malfunctioning of the engine. Then the aircraft was placed into service again.

After the accident the fuel feed valve was removed and appeared to be in perfect condition. The carburetor was removed and bench flowed. The results of this test indicated that the carburetor was in good condition. Further investigation into the malfunctioning of the engine was not possible at this naval activity.

The following diagram is submitted as an aid in diagnosing the accident.



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32. THE ANALYSIS

The board is of the opinion that the accident occurred as a result of the malfunctioning of the engine immediately after take-off, although the reason for the failure of the engine cannot be determined until the engine is disassembled by an overhaul activity.

The engine was turned over to Fleet Air Service Squadron Seven (7) A at NAAS El Centro, California, for disposition to an overhaul activity.

The following safety measures were taken to minimize personal injury to the pilot:

(a) Correct use of the shoulder harness, safety belt and protective helmet.

(b) Pilot showed proper technique in landing aircraft straight ahead with wheels up

33. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to insufficient facts the board is unable to adequately determine any conclusions to the primary factor causing the accident. There are no recommendations to be made.

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STATEMENT of John E. BALLANTYNE, AN, USN

At 0729 AL-17, F4U-4, BuNo. 81151 from VMA-251, pilot 2ndLt. Annand, USNCR, had apparent power failure shortly after take off and crashed approximately one half mile from the end of runway 21 in an open field. The crash equipment was dispatched to position X-ray and then directed to the scene of the crash. No smoke or fire was visible from the tower. Wind conditions WSW-20 to 25 knots as indicated by tower equipment. At 0805 the field was reopened for normal operations.

JOHN E. BALLANTYNE

Enclosure (1) to VMA-251 AAR 2-52

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STATEMENT of James A. ZUVER, AG-1, 318-05-17 USN

At approximately 0728 10 April 1952 as I was coming by a farm house approximately one fourth of a mile south of the main gate of N.A.A.S. El Centro, I noticed an F4U which had just taken off from the base trailing smoke. Then I noticed the smoke quit and the F4U appeared to be flying normal then I noticed it started losing altitude. The F4U did not lower it's nose and mshed into the ground. Then the plane broke in half with the tail section doing a flip over the engine half of the plane. When I got to the pilot he was conscious and said not to move his legs because they were broken.

JAMES A. ZUVER

Enclosure (2) to VMA-251 AAR 2-52

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STATEMENT of William B. NED, A. A. USN

At 0729 AL-17, BuNo 11151, pilot 2ndLt. Annand from VMA-251, called the tower and said that he was going in. He had just taken off from runway 21 and crashed approximately one half mile off the end of the runway. The crash phone was rung immediately by John R. Carpe and the term "off-station crash, position X-ray" was repeated three times. Then the crash equipment was directed to the scene of the crash. At 0805 the field reopened.

WILLIAM B. NED

Enclosure (3) to VMA-251 AAR 2-52

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STATEMENT of John R. CARPE, AN, USN

At 0729 AL-17, F4U-4, Duno. 81151 from VMA-251 called the tower and stated that he was "going in". He had just taken off on runway 21 and was approximately one half mile from the main gate. He seemed to lose power and slipped to the right following his right wing. The plane then crashed into the field off runway 21.

I then rang the crash phone and upon pushing the crash button I heard an unknown voice of the circuit stating that "there was a plane crash out past the main gate in the field."

I then gave the crash instructions, "Crash, position X-ray," and proceeded to stop all aircraft in the movement area and assigned altitudes to aircraft in the air.

JOHN R. CARPE

Enclosure (4) to VMA-251 AAR 2-52

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STATEMENT of Major Clarence H. MOORE, 09418, USMC

At about 0730, 10 April 1952, I was sitting in the BOQ when I heard the engine of an aircraft taking off quit cold.

I rushed to the window and saw an F4U-4, obviously the aircraft in trouble. It was about 100-150 feet high, nose a little above level, and decelerating rapidly. Then the nose dropped and the aircraft disappeared from my view behind a building.

CLARENCE H. MOORE

Enclosure (5) to VMA-251 AAR 2-52

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STATEMENT of Arthur M. MORAN, Lt.Col., 08610, USMC

At about 0730 A.M. on 10 April 1952, I observed from the hangar area a flight of five (5) planes from the squadron take off. The wind was fairly strong and slightly from the right so all planes became airborne in a short run. The last plane, AL-17 piloted by Lt. Annand, started trailing smoke after the gear had been retracted. Just after it passed the end of the runway, with altitude approximately one hundred fifty feet (150), the smoke ceased. The pilot had commenced a shallow left turn to join the rest of the flight and as the engine quit he dropped the nose slightly and commenced a slight right turn to get into the wind. He appeared to be going very slow, (however the wind was fairly strong) and as he passed over the houses and power lines near the gate I lost sight of him.

ARTHUR M. MORAN

Enclosure (6) to VMA-251 AAR 2-52

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STATEMENT of Douglass R ANNAND, 2nd Lt., 054592, USMC

On 10 April 1952 at 0500 I had successfully completed a night division tactics hop in F4U-4 type aircraft. I ate breakfast and prepared to take off on a strafing flight. During the engine warmup everything checked normal with from sixty to seventy RPM drop on the magnetos. I was the last of five to take off. When it came my turn to take off I gave the engine full throttle and made a normal take-off, pulled up the wheels and closed the canopy. At this time I was about one hundred and fifty feet in the air and the engine quit cold. I still had full throttle and full RPM. I was so low that I did not have enough time to check the cause of the engine failure. I lowered the nose of the plane as soon as I could and attempted to make a right turn back into the wind and land in an open field straight ahead of me. I remember trying to miss utility poles and maintain flying speed. The plane hit but I do not recall the actual impact and but very little after the accident.

DOUGLASS R ANNAND

Enclosure (7) to VMA-251 AAR 2-52

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STATEMENT OF Allen R. SEMB, 031424, USMC, Engineering Officer

Two (2) flights prior to the accident the aircraft returned to the station with the engine running rough and cutting out.

The engine appeared to have been running with an excessively rich mixture. On ground run up the engine functioned properly and inspection of the engine could reveal no cause for the rough running and cutting out. The aircraft was then test flown by myself and the engine operated perfectly and no indication of malfunctioning could be found. On the next flight the engine failed on take-off.

After the crash the fuel feed valve was removed and appeared to be in perfect condition. The carburetor was removed and bench flowed. The results of this test proved the carburetor to be in good condition.

Further investigation was not possible by this unit due to the condition of the airframe and the engine after the crash. Cause for the failure is undetermined by this officer.

Inspection for possible internal failure should be conducted by an overhaul activity.

ALLEN R. SEMB

Enclosure (8) to VMA-251 AAR 2-52

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