

Thursday, February 12, 1981

22 page

# Pilot error caused plane crash

Pilot error has been determined to be the cause of an OV-1 Mohawk crash that killed two Fort Huachuca men almost a year ago, according to a report by a collateral investigation board.

The accident, according to the report, resulted when the plane's pilot, CW4 Gerald L. Randall, attempted an aerobatic evasive maneuver at low altitude in a heavy aircraft when there was "extremely high altitude density."

Both Randall and the plane's observer, Sergeant Kenneth Seeley, were killed when the plane crashed and erupted in flames about 10 miles south of Sierra Vista on Highway 92. Both men were assigned to the U.S. Army Intelligence Center and School and were on a routine training mission at the time of the accident.

Results of the board's investigation fol-

low many months of interviewing safety specialists and witnesses by a collateral board at Fort Huachuca. An earlier investigation team from the Army Aviation Center at Fort Rucker, Ala., had prepared a report on the accident, but, because of Army regulations governing aircraft safety, its findings were not released.

The accident occurred Feb. 27, 1980, at approximately 5:20 p.m. According to eyewitnesses, the Mohawk was flying low over the Stump and Ash Canyon area and, following a steep climb, the plane stalled and crashed into the ground.

The collateral board report states that the twin-engine plane was operating normally prior to the crash and that the weight of the special electronic equipment in the plane, plus the weight of the nearly full fuel tanks, including auxiliary wing-tip tanks, made Randall's evasive

maneuver unsuccessful. Aircraft safety specialists indicate that aerobatic evasive maneuvers are not authorized for Mohawks equipped as Randall's was and do not conform to either FAA or Army safety regulations.

Several weeks prior to the accident the Intelligence Center and School had received the Daedalion Army Aviator Safety Award for Fiscal Year 1979 for 30,000 hours of accident-free flying. Since the accident, the school has logged more than 1,800 accident-free flying hours, and has reinforced training and increased awareness of the accident prevention program.

Ironically, announcement was made the week of Seeley's death that he had been selected the March 1980 soldier of the month for Fort Huachuca. Honors were bestowed upon the 26-year-old soldier posthumously.



## Aftermath

Investigators go through OV-1 Mohawk plane crash in February. CW4 Gerald Randall, 44, and Sgt. Kenneth Seeley, 26

were killed when their twin engine plane crashed into the Ash Canyon area and burst into flames.



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