

Four Fliers Die in Crash Off Azores

Norfolk-Based Men Killed When Navy Bomber Falls

NORFOLK—Four Norfolk-based Navy airmen were killed and two others injured Sunday when their Norfolk-based Martin P5M Martin patrol bomber crashed and burned during takeoff in the Azores.

The Navy yesterday identified the dead airmen as Charles H. Hoke, AD1, plane captain, husband of Mrs. Viola Mae Hoke of the 200 block of Ridgwell Rd.; Richard L. Knight, AD3, son of Mrs. Josephine McE. Knight, Louisville, Ky.; Jack A. Smelley, AT3, next of kin listed as Mrs. Alta Miller, Hobbs, N. Mex.; and Basil Jakelski, son of Jesse P. Jakelski, Baltimore.

Listed as seriously injured was Albert Sherman, AN, son of Mrs. Dorothy Lee, Evanston, Wyo. Lt. Donald E. Brunner, USN, pilot of the plane, was listed as slightly injured.

Others In Crew

Other members of the nine-man crew were Lt. (j.g.) Richard Ohi, Ens. Roger Pyle and Airman V. E. Klinger.

The crew is attached to Patrol Squadron 44 at the Norfolk Naval Air Station and recently was deployed to the Mediterranean to return the Patrol Squadron 56 plane to Norfolk. About six weeks ago VP-56 was sent to the Mediterranean, along with the seaplane tender Currituck, for special operational training exercises out of Port Taranto, Italy.

According to Atlantic Fleet Air Force sources here, the ill-fated aircraft was attempting a take-off, under instrument conditions, in what was termed "rough water" at Fayal Base, Horta. The pilot accomplished several "porpoises," a technique used in rough water. The crash occurred about 11 a.m. (EST) Sunday.

Shortly after the plane became airborne it struck the water, breaking apart and catching fire. The plane settled in about 28 fathoms of water, the Navy spokesman said.

Will Seek Bodies

The Currituck, which was standing by to service the seaplanes as they departed for Bermuda and Norfolk, was reported to be planning an attempt to recover the bodies and salvage the broken plane.

The 12-plane squadron had been ordered back to Norfolk after completing the deployment exercises. The remaining 11 planes are scheduled to return this week, stopping off at Bermuda on the homeward flight. The Currituck also is expected to depart for Bermuda and home when the last of the planes has departed.

One source said the tender should arrive in Norfolk early next week unless she is diverted back to the Mediterranean.

The fatal crash of the Norfolk plane was the second tragic incident involving Atlantic Fleet patrol bombers. Late last week, a P5M, operating out of Bermuda—but not a part of the VP-56 group—was lost over the Atlantic while on a training flight.

Navy and Coast Guard

Seek Missing Seaplane

HAMILTON, Bermuda, Nov. 12 (AP)—U.S. Navy planes and Coast Guard vessels today continued their extensive search for a seaplane missing since Friday on a routine patrol 300 miles north of Bermuda. Ten crewmen were aboard the plane.

The search will continue tomorrow if the weather permits, Navy officials said.

The plane, a P5M, belonged to Patrol Squadron 49, stationed at the U.S. Naval Station on Bermuda.

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