

826US DOE ARCHIVES	
U.S. ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION	
RG	
Collection	DOS McCraw
Box	17 Job 1320
Folder	MHS 3-9 JANUARY (1968)
Thule Incident	

107145

January 22, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR CHAIRMAN SEABORG  
COMMISSIONER RAMEY  
COMMISSIONER TAFE  
COMMISSIONER JOHNSON

SUBJECT: B-52 CRASH AT THULE AIR BASE, GREENLAND

## BEST AVAILABLE COPY

The information contained in this memorandum is the latest available as of 2:00 p.m., January 22, 1968. This information has been summarized from National Military Command Center and Headquarters, U. S. Air Force Command Post Memoranda provided to DHA by the Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (Atomic Energy).

At 3:40 p.m. (EST) on January 21, 1968, a SAC B-52 on a normal airborne alert mission crashed seven and one-half miles southwest of Thule Air Base, Greenland. The aircraft was executing an approach for a landing after having declared an emergency because of a fire in the navigator's compartment. The aircraft and crew of seven were assigned to the 380th Strategic Bomb Wing at Plattsburg, New York.

The crew abandoned the aircraft after smoke filled the cockpit so that the pilot was unable to see the instruments, all aircraft power was lost due to failed generators, and it became apparent that the aircraft could not reach Thule Air Base. The aircraft crashed on the ice of North Star Bay, estimated to be seven to nine feet thick, approximately seven miles southwest of the runway of Thule Air Base. Thule is currently in polar darkness except for a period of sub-twilight lasting

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED  
WITH DELETIONS  
BY AUTHORITY OF DOE/OG

*Carl Wilson 4/6/88*  
REVIEWED BY *J. Diaz 5/10/88*

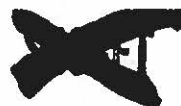
GROUP 1  
Excluded from automatic  
downgrading and  
declassification

This document contains information which, if disclosed, could be detrimental to the national defense. Its transmission or the disclosure of its contents in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

1064 64  
*Thule Incident*

DELETED VERSION ONLY



from approximately 10:00 a.m. (EST) to 2:00 p.m. (EST). After crashing the aircraft burned for five or six hours until it melted through the ice and the main part of the aircraft sank in water estimated to be six hundred feet deep. Major General R. O. Hunsiker, USAF, Deputy Chief of Staff (Material), SAC, has viewed the accident scene from a helicopter and reported that only six engines, one tire and smaller bits of debris are visible on the surface, and the water has refrozen. The helicopter is unable to land due to heavy snow on the ice in the area. The main body of the SAC Disaster Control Team has been dispatched to the scene by dog sled.

Six of the aircraft crew members have been recovered alive. Four are in excellent condition, the fifth suffered only a broken arm, the sixth is suffering from exposure having been missing until approximately 12:00 Noon (EST), January 22, but is expected to survive. The seventh crew member was a fatality as a result of injuries suffered in the bailout and his body has been recovered.

DELETED

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

The present evaluation is that the weapons remained fixed to the aircraft bomb racks and sank with the fuselage. At the present time, however, the location and condition of the four weapons is still unknown. There have been no reports of any explosions resulting from the accident, only the fire. There have been no reports of any radiological contamination.

In addition to the SAC Disaster Control Team led by General Hunsiker, two Air Force EOD teams, a safety team composed of AEC/ALO, Sandia Corporation, and LASL representatives, the DASA Nuclear Emergency Team, and Air Force Directorate of Nuclear Safety personnel have been dispatched to Thule Air Base and are scheduled to arrive at about 4:00 p.m. (EST), January 22.

DOE ARCHIVES

A Public Affairs officer from the U. S. European Command is in Denmark to assist the Danish Government and an officer from OASD/Public Affairs is en route to Thule.

Distribution:

1A&2A: Chairman  
3A: Com. Ramey  
4A: Com. Tape  
5A: Com. Johnson  
6A&7A: GM

MA:Prod AG201A

GFHedrick/sec

1-22-68

Original Signed By  
C. Winter

Edvard B. Giller  
Brigadier General, USAF  
Assistant General Manager  
for Military Application

8A: DCM  
9A: EACM  
10A&11A: SECY  
12A: OS  
13A: PI  
14A: Dir. Ref.  
15A: P&S (ret'd)  
16A: P&S (rdr)  
17A: Reader  
18A: Locator  
19A: DHA Files



Copy Taken from DoD documents, work sheets, - See OA-LXI 7581

65