

on a normal airborne alert mission and was in the process of

A continuing investigation into the B-52 crash in Greenland reveals that the bomber crashed on the ice of North Star Bay, approximately seven miles southwest of the runway at Thule Air Base. The aircraft was ~~ex~~ecuting an approach for a landing after having declared an emergency because of a fire in the navigator's compartment. The aircraft and crew were assigned to the 380th Strategic Bomb Wing, Plattsburg, New York.

Intense heat from the burning aircraft melted the surrounding ice allowing the main wreckage to drop into the bay, estimated to be some 600 feet in depth.

The four nuclear weapons aboard have not been located, however, wreckage from the bomber is scattered over an extended area on the surface of the ice. It is also possible that the weapons dropped through the hole in the ice with the main bulk of the aircraft.

Six crewmembers have been recovered. Four are ~~pre~~ported in good condition, one has a broken arm, one was killed and the seventh is still missing.

A primary hindrance to rescue and salvage operations is that Greenland is in a period of polar darkness except for a period of sub-twilight between 10:00 AM EST and 2:00 PM EST.

9/a

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Sunday, January 21, 1968
5:15 PM

Mr. President:

At 3:40 PM today a B-52, with four nuclear weapons aboard, crashed approximately eight miles short of the runway at Thule Air Base, Greenland.

Just prior to the crash the aircraft reported a fire aboard in the navigational section and rescue teams on the scene report that the aircraft is still burning. The rescue teams also reported that of a crew of seven, two and possibly three of the crew members survived the crash.

Preparations are presently underway to send a ordnance disposal team to the crash site to handle the nuclear weapons.

White House Situation Room

Raymond F. McHenry
Briefing Officer

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THE JOINT STAFF

THE NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER
WASHINGTON, D.C. 2030122 January 1968
1:30 AM EST

91-b

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Subject: B-52 Crash at Thule AB, Greenland

1. The B-52 that crashed on the ice seven and one-half miles southwest of Thule AB, Greenland, at 211540 EST, has since burned through and fallen into the water; the water has refrozen. Scattered wreckage is still visible on the surface of the ice; however, it appears that the main wreckage went below the surface. The condition or location of the weapons that were aboard the aircraft is still unknown. The water depth in the area is approximately 600 feet.

2. Information has been received that General Hunziker's team departed Offutt AFB, Nebraska at 212025 EST, and is now estimating arrival at Thule AB at 220230 EST.

3. A Public Affairs Officer from US European Command is proceeding to Denmark to assist the Danish Government. From Washington an officer from OASD/PA is en route to Thule. The DDO has been advised by the OASD/PA that public announcements on this incident will be withheld pending initial release by appropriate officials of the Danish Government expected early this morning.

4. It has been reported that one crewmember of the five rescued sustained a broken arm. The remaining four are in good condition. Additional information indicates one of the two crewmembers previously reported missing is dead. The seventh crewmember is still missing.

5. The attached map shows the approximate location of the crash.

Marshall B. Garth
MARSHALL B. GARTH
Brigadier General, USA
Deputy Director for
Operations (NMCC)

1 attachment
map

Distribution:

(See page 2)

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

NJ 88-108

By *if*, NARA, Date 8-25-88

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Distribution: (NMCC MFR 1:30 AM EST, 22 Jan 68, subj: B-52
Crash at Thule AB, Greenland)

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THE NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

91-c

21 January 1968
2015 EST

THE JOINT STAFF

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Subject: B-52 Crash at Thule AB, Greenland

1. At 211540 EST, a SAC B-52 aircraft 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 were assigned to the 380th Strategic Bomb Wing at Plattsburg, N.Y.

2. As of 211850 EST, five crewmembers had been recovered but their condition is unknown. The pilot felt sure that he was the last crewmember to leave the aircraft prior to the crash. There were seven crewmembers on board. The aircraft impacted on the ice which is reported to be seven and one-half to nine feet thick. Thule is currently in polar darkness except for a period of sub-twilight lasting from approximately 1000 EST to 1400 EST.

3. At 211900 EST, the aircraft wreckage was still burning; four [redacted] weapons were on board. Information on location and condition of the weapons is not known at this time. General Hunziker, SAC DCSM, was scheduled to depart Offutt at 211930 EST for Thule with the BROKEN ARROW Team, estimating six hours en route. A C-141, with a nuclear inspection team from Norton AFB, California is scheduled to arrive at Thule AB at 220950 EST. Two other aircraft, a C-141 from Dover AFB, Delaware and a C-118 from Peterson AFB, Colorado, carrying nuclear technicians and equipment, are scheduled to arrive at Thule by 220950 EST.

W. R. McCleendon

W. R. MCCLENDON
Rear Admiral, USN
Deputy Director for
Operations (NMCC)

Distribution:

(See page 2)

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DISTRIBUTION: (NMCC MFR 2015 EST, 21 Jan 68, subj: B-S2 Crash
at Thule AB, Greenland)

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