

# TRAGIC 'DISC' HOAX COST 2 FLIERS' LIVES

A "flying disc" hoax caused the death of two veteran Army fliers who crashed in their plane last week while returning from Tacoma and no investigation of a "flying disc" explosion, it was learned today from official Army sources.

The officers died, presumably, without knowing that the metal fragments they were carrying in the plane were ordinary, harmless metallic stones, picked up along a beach.

The civilians responsible have admitted the hoax, Army officers said.

The story of the crash of a B-25 bomber near Tacoma, Wash., Friday while on a flight from McChord Field to Hamilton Field is expected to be released by the Army tonight.

## WIDE REPORT AWAITED

Officers were awaiting the full report of the Aircraft Accident Commission and of investigating officers before making it all facts public.

The story, as revealed unofficially, is:

Two Army Air Corps intelligence officers, Capt. William L. Davidson, of 587 34th Avenue, San Francisco, the pilot, and First Lieut. Frank M. Brown, of 21 Sunset Street, Vallejo, went to Tacoma to investigate a report that a "flying disc" had struck a boat near Mary Island, Wash.

The report made by the boat owners of the time was graphic to the point of making the mysterious "plate" explode in the air before a piece swished by, knocking a horn off the small craft and inflicting minor damage.

## TOLD 'IN FUN'

The story, evidently told "in fun," grew beyond expectations and was heard by two civilian pilots conducting their own investigation. Kenneth Arnold, the man who first saw a "saucer," and United Air Lines Capt. E. J. Smith, the transport pilot who said he followed nine discs on July 4.

The two Army officers went to Tacoma to interview Arnold and Smith, according to Brig. Gen. Ned Schramm, Fourth Air Force chief of staff, who admitted after the crash that the air force was conducting a 30-day-wide investigation in connection with "flying disc" reports.

While there, the officers apparently obtained pieces of metal which were reported to have been part of the crashed disc.

## STONES EXHIBITED

Harold Dahl and Fred L. Crisman of Tacoma, who were quoted as saying the pieces had struck their boat, later denied giving Arnold, Smith or the two Army officers any parts of a "flying disc." Dahl exhibited a pasteboard box full of metallic stones, which Dahl said he had picked up on the beach.

Captain Davidson and Lieutenant Brown were returning to Hamilton Field with these bits of metal and their report when the plane crashed.

The plane developed engine trouble shortly after leaving McChord Field at 2 a.m. and dropped a flare over the Longview area and then was seen with one engine afire. Two men, the crew chief and a passenger, were ordered by the pilots into parachutes and jumped to safety from the burning plane.

Davidson and Brown were found dead in the wreckage, eight miles east of Blythe.

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jamespcarrion  
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