

AIRMUNITIONS LETTER

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HEADQUARTERS
OGDEN AIR MATERIEL AREA
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
Hill Air Force Base, Utah

10 March 1964

OOAMA AIRMUNITIONS LETTER
NO. 136-11-56N

SUBJECT: Advance Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technical Information

TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION

AUTHORITY: This AML is published under the authority of and in compliance with AFE 136-10.

SUMMARY OF NUCLEAR WEAPON ACCIDENTS AND RELATED INCIDENTS

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1. REFERENCE.

AF Form 1058, 22 January 1964, Control Number TAFB 64-1,
62d Munitions Maintenance Squadron, Turner Air Force Base, Georgia.

2. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Airmunitions Letter is to present
a summary of a nuclear weapon accident and the procedures employed
by EOD personnel.

3. SUMMARY.

a. General Information.

(1) At approximately 0140 hours, 13 January 1964,
an B-52D, with two [REDACTED] bombs aboard, crashed while enroute from
Westover Air Force Base, Massachusetts to its home station,
Turner Air Force Base, Georgia.

(2) The crash site was a thickly wooded area on the
side of Savage Mountain about 22 miles from Cumberland, Maryland,
and about 3/4 mile from the nearest road. The snow was nearly
three feet deep at the site and the temperature was approximately
0 degrees Fahrenheit. Eight more inches of snow fell on the
wreckage after the crash (Figures 1 and 2).

(3) Both weapons were located 75 feet apart in the
immediate vicinity of the crash site. The rear case sections had
broken off both bombs and had been consumed in a fuel fire (Figure
3).

b. Forward Bomb Condition.

(1) The basic assembly cover plate had broken off
and partially burned (Figure 4).

(2) The X-Unit was broken off; and one fast rise
thermal battery and both sequential timers were torn loose from
their mountings but were still connected electrically (Figure 5).

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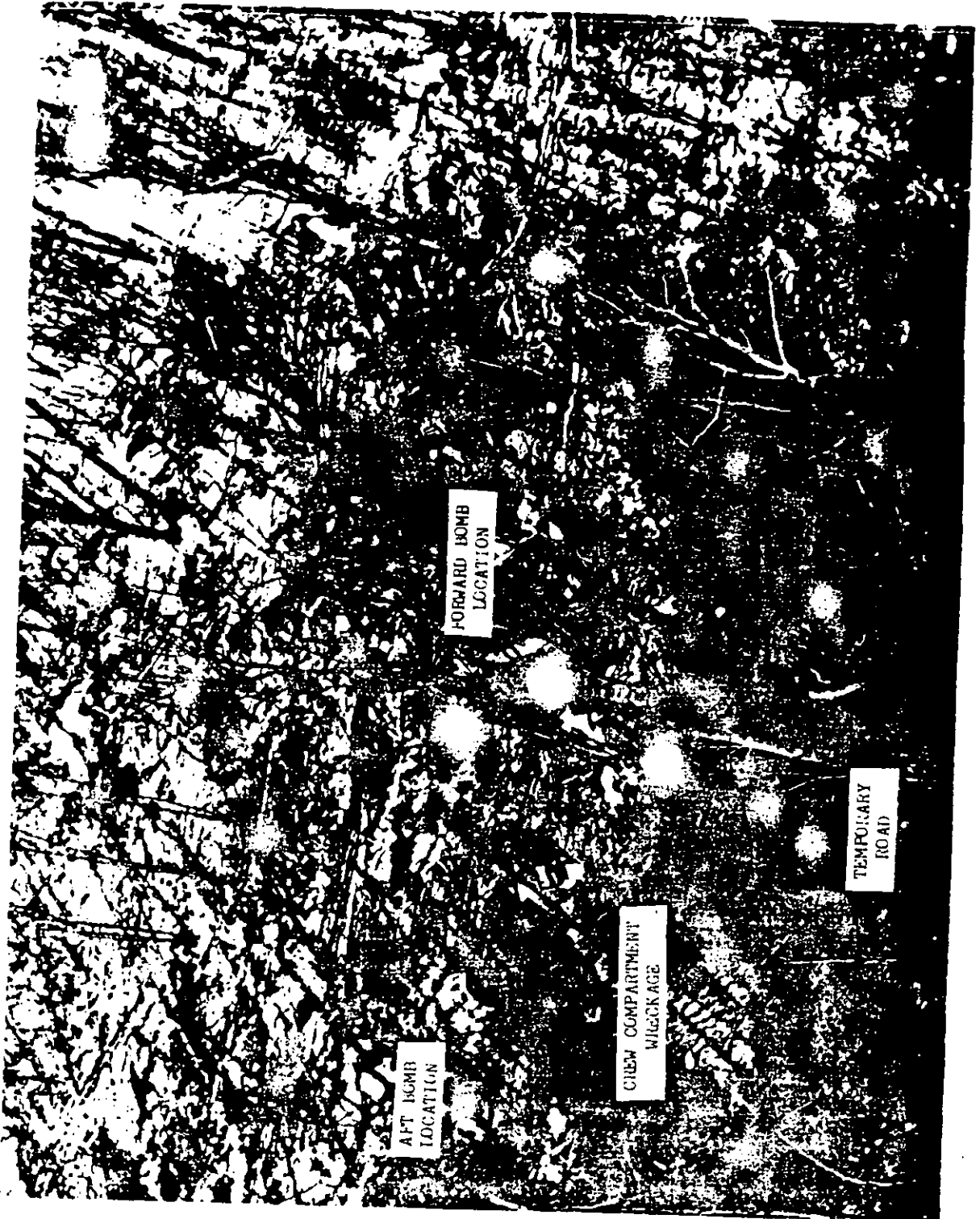


FIGURE 1.

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- A. CREW COMPARTMENT
- B. FORWARD BOMB
- C. 1/2 SECTION OF HONEYCOMB
- D. CLOSING PLATE, FORWARD BOMB

FIGURE 2.

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BURNED CHUTE
AFT, BOMB

FIGURE 3.

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FIGURE 4.

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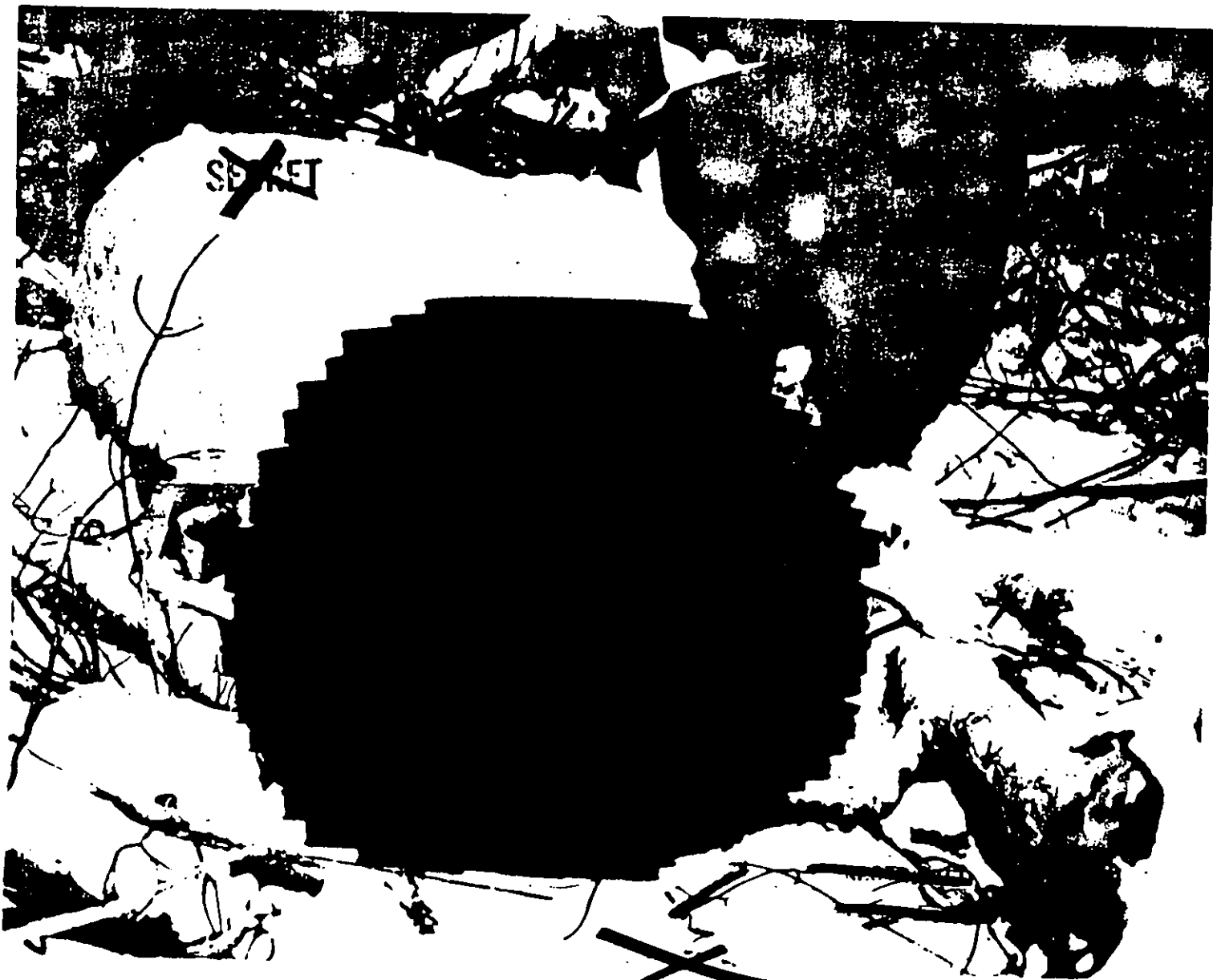


FIGURE 5.

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(3) All honeycomb sections were torn away (Figures 6 and 7).

(4) A crack approximately $3/4$ of the circumference and a triangular bulge 8 inches across were found at the center of the basic assembly.

[REDACTED]

(6) The safing switch position indicator was sheared off at the basic assembly skin level.

(7) The component ring had shifted about seven degrees counterclockwise.

c. Aft Bomb Condition.

(1) All honeycomb sections except the sleeve and one section approximately 3 feet by 3 feet were torn from the bomb. The 3 foot by 3 foot section remained attached to the right side (Figure 8).

(2) The entire honeycomb sleeve had slipped seven inches to the rear and covered 75 per cent of the safing switch position indicator.

(3) The safing switch was in the "SAFE" position.

(4) The basic assembly cover plate was intact (Figure 9) and all interior components appeared to be undamaged (Figure 10).

d. Action by Army EOD Units.

(1) Army EOD Units from Fort Clinton, Ohio, and Fort Meade, Maryland, were first to arrive at the crash site. They reconnoitered the scene and monitored with a T-290 with negative results.

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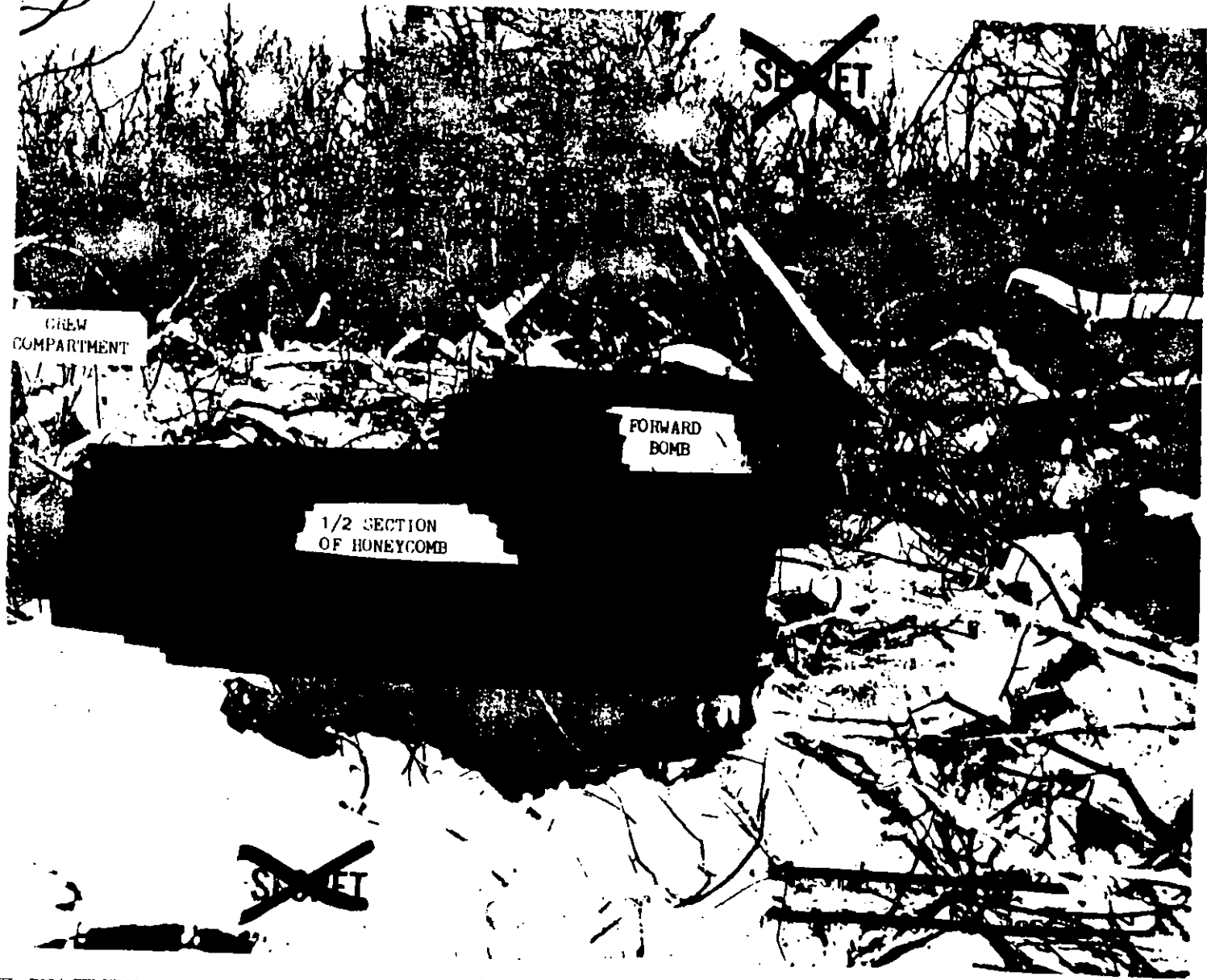


FIGURE 6.

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~~HONEYCOMB
NOSE SECTION~~

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(10)



HONEYCOMB
MATERIAL

NOSE OF BASIC
ASSEMBLY

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FIGURE 8.

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FIGURE 9.

XI

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- A. FAST RISE THERMAL BATTERY
- B. SEQUENTIAL TIMERS
- C. OPTION SWITCH

FIGURE 10

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e. Action by AF CBR Personnel.

CBR personnel from the 8th Air Force and Turner Air Force Base, monitored for alpha, beta and gamma. No radiation was detected.

f. Action by Air Force EOD Personnel.

- (1) Disconnected all battery cables.
- (2) Disconnected the tritium reservoir cables.
- (3) Disconnected the X-Unit cables on the aft bomb.
- (4) Loosened the reservoir gland nut and tested for tritium. None was detected.
- (5) Removed two detonators (detonating cord system) from a fin of one bomb. The detonators and fin belonging to the other bomb were not found.
- (6) Removed two MLU-11/C cartridges from the cable cutter device of the bomb clip-in (Figure 11). The cable cutter for the other clip-in assembly could not be located.
- (7) After careful examination of the bombs, consultation with other EOD personnel available, and consideration of all factors, it was decided that further disassembly was not warranted and that the weapons were safe for removal and transporting.

g. Recovery Equipment and Procedures.

- (1) A D-6 Bulldozer was required to clear a road 3/4 mile from the county road to the crash site.
- (2) A Michigan Model 125A Front-end Loader with an 8-1/2 foot bucket was used to lift and transport the bombs to the county road.

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A. CABLE CUTTER CARTRIDGES (2 EA) AFTER REMOVAL
B. CABLE CUTTER ASSEMBLY (AFTER REMOVAL OF MLU 11C CARTRIDGES)

FIGURE 11.

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(3) The bolsters for the bombs were used in order to take advantage of the thrust pin in securing the weapons. The bolsters had to be built up to compensate for the missing honeycomb. This was done with 2 Inch by 4 Inch lumber and mattresses.

(4) Since the Loader had insufficient capacity to lift bomb and bolster together, the empty bolsters were attached to the bucket by chains and placed on a flat bed trailer.

(5) The forward weapon, which was cracked, was lifted using four chains evenly spaced on both sides of the crack. If the bomb separated during hoisting, both portions would be safely supported.

(6) The aft bomb was lifted by three evenly spaced chains attached to the Loader bucket.

(7) Load binder chains were used to secure the bombs to the bolsters.

(8) Load binder chains and wooden chocks were used to secure the bolsters to the trailer.

h. Non-nuclear Munitions Recovery.

(1) Approximately 1,200 rounds of Caliber .50 API ammunition were recovered from the aircraft tail section which was found 1.2 miles away in a nearly inaccessible area. A cargo net of heavy canvas and rope was made and the ammunition lifted out by helicopter.

(2) Three MXU-4/A starter cartridges and one unfired initiator were located in the wreckage.

(3) All recovered non-nuclear munitions were transported to Fort Belvoir, Virginia for destruction by Army EOD units.

1. Personnel Participation.

(1) Lt Col R.D. Stonesifer, DS, 8th Air Force

(2) Major C. Kelwick, DM4E, 8th Air Force

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- (3) Capt W. Gobble, DM4E, 8th Air Force
- (4) Capt T. Turner, DM4E, SAC
- (5) Capt T.A. Feaster, 62MMS
- (6) MSgt Granger, 62MMS
- (7) TSgt Edsall, DM4E, 8th Air Force
- (8) A2c Holsonbeck, Photographer, Turner AFB
- (9) Mr White, AEC
- (10) Mr Buckley, Sandia Corp

FOR THE COMMANDER

Carl G. Palmer, Lt. Col. USAF
70/ JACK L. TUELLER
Colonel, USAF
Commander
2705th Airmunitions Wing

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