

Seabee Bulletin

FROM PERSONAL PLANE DIVISION OF REPUBLIC AVIATION CORPORATION

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TEX RANKIN'S ACCIDENT

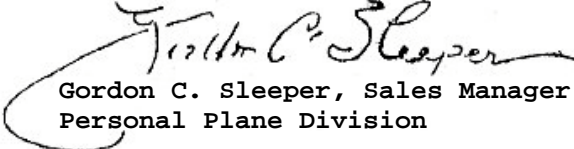
In an earlier bulletin I expressed the deep sorrow of all of us at this untimely death of Tex Rankin, Cy Wallan and Jack Elie in the accident that took place at Klamath Falls, Oregon, Sunday, February 23rd, 1947.

Many stories entirely without basis of fact have been printed concerning this accident. I was very glad on my recent trip west to meet at Seattle the Civil Aeronautics Board's Chief Safety Engineer who wrote the official report on Tex's accident and from him to learn his findings of what actually happened.

The airport at Klamath Falls has an altitude of 4080 feet which corrected for barometric conditions on the day of the accident was equivalent of 4800 feet. Tex took off with maximum gas load, some 78 pounds of baggage and with a four-passenger weight that brought the overload to 331 pounds and possibly more.

His plane was reported as airborne at less than half of the available runway but was variously described as hanging in the air or staggering through the air for a mile and a half toward the town. It is believed never to have climbed over one hundred feet. It hit and severed high voltage power line and fell partly inverted on the nose of the plane killing three of the four occupants. Buz Thompson is reported as likely to recover fully but may never be able to recall the full details of what happened.

The C.A.B. report finds no evidence of malfunctioning of the engine or controls but attributed the accident primarily to overloading.


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