

## **Nine Killed in Plane Crash at Mount Mitchell - October 5, 1949**

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Also from the disaster files is the story of a military plane crash at Mount Mitchell. Happened the day before the Nash County school bus incident on Wednesday, October 5, 1949.

As the *Raleigh Times* reported on October 7, from an AP story, an Air Force C-47 transport crashed about 10:30 a.m. that morning. All nine about were killed. The wreckage was found "six miles from the Blue Ridge Parkway, three-quarters of a mile down on the east side of Mount Mitchell."

All nine were found dead, and the wreckage burned. The plane was found in the morning of the second day of air and ground searchers. "Volunteer crews" of "forest rangers and mountain" aided Army personnel, who were "rushed here" from the Air Force base in Greenville, SC. (Said base located about 100 miles south of the site.)

The searchers were "augmented by a skilled crew of ground searchers" who were flown to the scene from Westover Field, MA. "Army medical personnel" meanwhile "stood by on the mountain."

"It was said at the time two mountain said they heard a noise which could have been the crash of an airplane in the balsam-thatched peaks." The men from the Busick community "immediately gave the alarm." The plane crashed in a "heavily timbered area near a rough road, once the bed of a lumber railroad."

When the plane left Washington-Bolling Air Force Base at 8:55 a.m., it had about nine hours worth of fuel. Its destination was Mobile, AL. The plane crashed into the "forested slope of the cloud-shrouded mountain" which is 6,684-feet high.

The Douglas C-47 was the military counterpart of the popular two-engine Douglas DC-3.

### **Bomber Crash in 1944**

Five years earlier, an Army B-24 bomber crashed near Mount Mitchell. The accident occurred about 11:30 p.m. on June 13, 1944. All ten crew members were killed after the plane, on a training flight from Chatham Field in Savannah, "ploughed into Green Knob Mountain." As reported the Burlington *Times-News* the next day.

The crash occurred in McDowell County, near Mount Mitchell, and a mile and a half from the Blue Ridge Parkway. Memo to self: Add both of these crashes to my [deadlest disasters database](#).

### **Air Ambulance Crash in 1966**

Two decades later, an air ambulance crashed on Sunday night, May 22, 1966. The Piper Comanche had disappeared on a trip from Memphis to Marion, NC. They were traveling there to retrieve the body of a "former Memphis man who had died of a heart attack while visiting the mountains." (Again reported by the *Times-News*.)

Civil Air Patrol search missions (ground and air) were planned for Monday. The wreckage was located early that morning, about 7:15 a.m. It was found near the top of the mountain, at an elevation of "about 6,200 to 6,300 feet." The wreckage was found just below an old parking lot for tourists. Both crew members had been killed.

Here's a YouTube video by the user summitoutdoors posted in 2013, who filmed himself and hikers at the crash site. Significant pieces of the fuselage and tail section still remain on the mountain:

Sources:

- [Aviation Safety Network entry](#)
- [The Evening Independent, October 7, 1949](#)
- [GenDisasters entry](#)
- Raleigh Times, October 7, 1949
- The Times News, June 14, 1944
- [The Times-News, May 24, 1966.](#)

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