

COLLATERAL  
REPORT

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VOL. I OF III

DEFENDANT'S  
EXHIBIT  
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I of III

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS MILITARY AIRLIFT COMMAND  
SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, ILLINOIS 62225



REPLY TO  
ATTN OF JAM

8 Oct 75

SUBJECT Report of Collateral Investigation, C-5A Aircraft Crash,  
4 April 1975, near Saigon, RVN

TO: Carroll E. Dubuc, Esq.  
Haight, Gardner, Poor & Havens  
Federal Bar Building  
1815 H Street, N. W.  
Washington, DC 20006

Attached per your request are two copies of subject Report of  
Collateral Investigation.

*Willis L. Mog*

WILLIS L. MOG, Lt Colonel, USAF  
Chief, Military Affairs & Justice Div  
Office of the Staff Judge Advocate

1 Atch  
Report (2 cys)

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS AIR FORCE INSPECTION AND SAFETY CENTER  
NORTON AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA 92409



REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: SERR

SUBJECT: Request for Accident Report

TO: Haight, Gardner, Poor, & Havens  
ATTN: Mr. Carroll E. Dubuc  
1 State Street Plaza  
New York, New York 10004

1. This is in response to your telephone conversation with Mr. Ray C. Hellman, Reports & Analysis Division, Air Force Inspection and Safety Center for two copies of the accident report involving the C-5A near Saigon, Vietnam, on 4 April 1975.

2. Attached are the factual portions of the report. Those portions exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act are as follows:

a. Those portions of the report concerning the investigating officers' opinions, speculations, conclusions, findings, and recommendations are not releasable. This information is exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, Public Law 90-23, 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(5). It may be withheld under the statute and regulations because the release of such information would have a stifling effect on the free and frank expressions of ideas, opinions, and recommendations between Air Force officials.

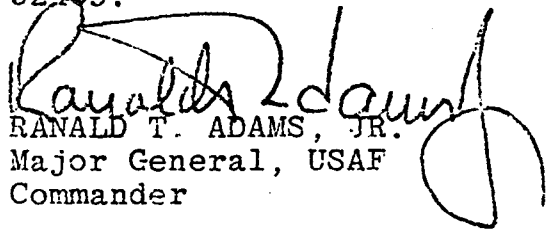
b. The statements of witnesses giving unsworn testimony before the investigating board are not releasable. Each witness was promised by testifying that his testimony would be used solely for accident prevention and would not be used for any other purpose. This promise of confidentiality is to induce the witness to tell the board everything he knows about the accident even though his statement may be against his personal interest or possibly incriminating. Such testimony is exempt under 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4). Statements are retained in confidence as they are essential to an effective investigation.

c. The medical data and personnel records are exempt from release under 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(6). This information would result in a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

e. Engineering evaluations performed by Lockheed-Georgia Company, Marietta, Georgia, are exempt from release, 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4). This information was received from contractor in confidence.

3. The decision to withhold release of portions of this accident report may be appealed in writing to the Secretary of the Air Force within 45 days from the date of this letter. Include in your appeal any reason for reconsideration you wish to present, and attach a copy of this letter. Address your letter as follows: Secretary of the Air Force, through HQ AFISC, Norton Air Force Base, California 92409.

4. Federal regulations require that the cost of researching and processing this material be assessed to the requesting party. The cost of processing these reports is \$368.10. Please make your check payable to the Treasurer of the United States and forward it to AFISC/DA, Norton AFB, CA 92409.

  
RANALD T. ADAMS, JR.  
Major General, USAF  
Commander

1 Atch  
Acclnt Rprt (2 cys)

COLLATERAL INVESTIGATION OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT  
INVOLVING

C-5A SERIAL NUMBER 68-218

15 AUG 1975

I. AUTHORITY

1. This is a report of a collateral investigation conducted from 4 April 1975 through 15 August 1975 at Saigon, Republic of Vietnam; Clark Air Base, Republic of Philippines; Travis Air Force Base, California; and Scott Air Force Base, Illinois by Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr., Colonel, USAF, under the authority of Special Order A-29, Headquarters Military Airlift Command (MAC), Scott AFB, Illinois, dated 4 April 1975. (TAB 1) The investigation was conducted in accordance with Air Force Regulation 110-14, as supplemented (TAB 2) and Air Force Manual 120-3.

II. MATTERS INVESTIGATED

2. This investigation was made to ascertain the facts and circumstances and to obtain and preserve all available evidence of the aircraft accident involving Air Force C-5A Serial Number 68-218, hereinafter referred to as C-5A 218, occurring at 0830 GMT (1630 hours local), 4 April 1975, 2 nautical miles northeast of Runway 25L, Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Saigon, Republic of Vietnam. As a result of the accident the best evidence obtainable to date indicates that 138 of the 314 persons aboard the aircraft were fatally injured, to include 11 U. S. Air Force crew members; 40 U. S. citizens, (35 Department of Defense (DOD) civilian employees of the United States Defense Attache Office (USDAO), Saigon and 5 others to include 2 dependent wives, 2 dependent children and 1 private citizen); 79 Vietnamese National children; and 8 third country nationals (5 German, 2 Australian, 1 Malaysian). The total of those who survived is 176, to include 18 crew members; 8 U. S. citizens (2 U. S. government civilian employees, 4 dependent children and 2 private citizens); and 150 Vietnamese National children. (See paragraph 27, below) The aircraft, assigned to the 60 Military Airlift Wing (MAC), Travis Air Force Base, California was totally destroyed. (TAB 82)

3. During the course of this investigation, 58 witnesses were interviewed and the testimony of 36 witnesses was taken in the form of sworn statements, where possible, unsworn statements and verbatim transcripts of testimony. (TABS 3 thru 38) Documentary evidence was obtained in the form of records, diagrams, maps, transcripts of tape recordings, photographs, laboratory analysis reports, letters, etc., (TABS 39 thru 99) and pertinent files and directives reviewed. Technical assistance was provided by personnel of the Directorate of Aircrew Standardization and Evaluation, Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations; and the Directorate of

Maintenance Engineering, Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics; both of Hq MAC, as well as personnel of the Directorate of Aircrew Standardization, Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations; and the Directorate of Maintenance Engineering, Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics, 22 Air Force, Travis AFB. Additional technical assistance was provided by personnel of the Metallurgical Laboratory, San Antonio Air Logistics Center (AFLC), Kelly Air Force Base, Texas.

### III. FACTS

4. Mission PYM 3578, C-5A 218, departed Travis AFB on 1 April 1975 at 0647Z. (Unless otherwise stated, all times are Greenwich Mean time designated by the letter "Z".) (TAB 72) The mission itinerary directed a flight to Warner Robins AFB, Georgia for onload of 45.9 tons of cargo, thru flight return to Travis, enroute stops at Hickam AFB, Hawaii, Andersen AFB, Guam and Clark AB, with subsequent offload at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Saigon and return to Clark AB. (TABS 71 and 72)

5. The aircraft arrived at Warner Robins AFB at 1058Z (TAB 72) and after onload, departed at 1710Z (TAB 72). During the time the aircraft was on the ground, refueling and routine maintenance was performed. It arrived at Travis AFB at 2242Z (TAB 72). After refueling and routine ground maintenance the aircraft departed, with a new crew, for Hickam AFB at 0505Z, 2 April, arriving at 1020Z (TAB 72), where the aircraft was again refueled, routine maintenance performed and a new crew enplaned. During the flight from Travis to Hickam it was noted that the copilot's windshield was arcing. Because of the high priority of the mission, it was not replaced but a windshield was placed aboard the aircraft for subsequent installation at Clark AB. (TAB 89, p. 19)

6. The aircraft commander for the remainder of the mission (departure from Hickam until accident) was Captain Dennis W. Traynor, 257-70-7773, 22 Military Airlift Squadron (MAS), Travis AFB. The remainder of the 15-man crew, all assigned to the 22 MAS, constituted an augmented crew consisting of 4 pilots, 2 navigators, 3 flight engineers and 6 loadmasters. The identity of the flight crew members, their flight authorizations, qualifications and flying experience are described in TABS 53, 54 and 56 thru 70.

7. C-5A 218 departed Hickam on 2 April at 1524Z and after a routine flight, landed at Andersen AFB, Guam at 2315Z, 2 April. (TAB 72) The aircraft was refueled at Andersen, routine ground maintenance performed and the mission proceeded with departure from Andersen at 0239Z on 3 April and arrival at Clark Air Base at 0637Z, (TAB 72), where the crew went into crew rest. Enroute to Clark, the #2 engine was shut down because of high vibration readings on the Malfunction Detection Analysis and Recording System (MADAR). (TAB 3 and TAB 89, p. 25)

8. Following 12 hours crew rest, Captain Traynor's crew was alerted at 1900Z, 3 April (0300 local/4 April) and informed that they would take C-5A 218 into Saigon, offload and return to Clark. The crew reported to the Clark AB Operations Center at 2000Z, 3 April (0400 local/4 April) for flight-planning and pre-mission briefing, which was accomplished. At that time, maintenance was in progress on the installation of the copilot's windshield and the inspection on the #2 engine. Prior to departure from Clark AB, it was determined, after inspection, that the #2 engine discrepancy was due to a malfunction in the indicating system. The faulty vibration pick-up discrepancy was carried forward. (TAB 89, p. 27) Additionally, the copilot's windshield was replaced. (TABS 3, 4 and 89, p. 19)

9. At approximately 2200Z, 3 April (0600 local/4 April), Captain Traynor was advised in a telephone call from 22 AF Operations Center, Travis AFB, that, after offloading the cargo at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, he was to onload as many Vietnamese orphans together with their "attendants" or "escorts" as were then available and processed, and return on a primary special mission basis to Clark AB. Additionally, the floorloading of passengers in the cargo compartment was authorized as necessary. (TAB 3)

10. At 2000Z, 3 April, 22 AF Operations Center was advised by the MAC Operations Center that the Commander MAC directed the movement of as many Vietnamese orphans as were available out of Tan Son Nhut Air Base on C-5A 218 to Clark AB and the floorloading of passengers in the cargo compartment, if necessary. (TAB 73) The authorization by the Commander, MAC was given pursuant to the direction of higher Air Force authority as reflected by entries made in the MAC Contingency Support Staff log.

11. The mission departed Clark for Tan Son Nhut Air Base at 0213Z, 3 April (1013 local/4 April). In addition to the 15 members of the flight crew noted in paragraph 6, above, nine additional Air Force personnel joined the crew in the flight from Clark to Tan Son Nhut Air Base. They included a loadmaster, SMSgt Snedegar; 2 flight nurses, 1st Lt Aune and Wirtz; 3 medical technicians, SSgt Hadley, Sgt Wise and Sgt Gmerek; 2 photographers, MSgt Castro and Sgt Nance; and a MAC mission observer, Lt Col Willis. The flight authorization, qualifications and flying experience of the loadmaster, SMSgt Snedegar, are described in TABS 53, 54 and 62. Flight authorizations for remaining 8 crew members are found at TAB 53. The departure from Clark, the enroute flight and the arrival at Saigon were routine. No engine problems were experienced. Arrival time at Saigon was 0451Z (1251 local) 4 April. (TAB 72)

12. Upon arrival at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, the off-loading of the cargo was completed through the aft ramp complex in a rapid and orderly manner. In preparation for the onload of Vietnamese children and escorts, numerous support items had been placed aboard the aircraft at Clark AB to include blankets, pillows, extra restraining straps, milk, juice, baby bottles, disposable diapers and box lunches. Additionally, a second medical crew, consisting of 2 flight nurses, Captain Klinker and Lt Goffinet and 3 medical technicians, MSgt Boutwell, SSgt Paget and TSgt Johnson, which had been transported from Clark to Tan Son Nhut in a following C-141, joined the first medical crew aboard the aircraft to assist in the onload and subsequent flight to Clark. Their flight authorizations are found at TAB 53.

13. The C-5 has three compartments for the crew and passengers: the flight deck (consisting of the cockpit, crew bunks, relief crew area, galley and courier compartment); the upstairs troop compartment; and the downstairs cargo compartment. (See TAB 86, Drawings of C-5A) Onloading of passengers by flight and medical crew personnel was accomplished through the left troop door. A human chain was formed and the Vietnamese infant children were handed from the left troop door, up the troop compartment ladder into the troop compartment where they were placed two to a seat. Pillows and blankets were placed between the infants and their seat belts in order to allow for comfort and to insure that the infants were securely fastened. After the troop compartment's aft-facing seats were fully occupied with infants, 145 in all, the loading of passengers to include older Vietnamese children, their adult escorts and a few U. S. National dependent children was completed in the cargo compartment, again through the left troop door. Since there were no seats in the cargo compartment, a double layer of blankets was placed on the floor of the cargo compartment and the passengers either laid or sat upon the blankets facing forward in an area which was located aft of the crew entry door and forward of the main landing gear. They were secured by means of tie-down straps. Additionally, passengers were seated and secured by means of straps along the "catwalks" on both sides of the cargo compartment in the same area. Baggage was loaded through the paratroop door and by means of a conveyor belt positioned at the center of the aft ramp. Baggage was placed in rows on the deck of the cargo compartment from approximately fuselage station 1700 aft to the aft edge of the aft ramp. See TABS 3 thru 20, Statements of the flight and medical crew members.

14. The selection of those Vietnamese children who were transported to Tan Son Nhut AB for evacuation aboard C-5A 218, as well as their U. S. and foreign national adult "attendants" or "escorts", was coordinated by personnel of the American Embassy, Saigon, as well as personnel of the U. S. Defense Attache Office (USDAO) and the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID), both elements thereof. No manifest of Vietnamese children was ever presented to the



crew of C-5A 218, although the crew was informed they would receive one, and that there was an "accurate master copy of the passenger manifest on file." Additionally, the crew was told that "the orphanage or some agency had accurate manifests." (See TABS 3 and 4, Statements of Captains Traynor and Harp) A copy of a passenger manifest containing 43 names, which later proved to be those of 35 U. S. National Department of Defense civilian employees of USDAO and 5 dependents thereof as well as 3 dependents of an U. S. Army E-7 was given to the crew. (TAB 39) An additional handwritten list containing 10 names which later proved to be those of a USAID physician, three private U. S. citizens and 6 foreign nationals was provided to members of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Board by officials of USDAO in Saigon on 6 April 1975. At the bottom of the list, the following appears: "There was no manifest of orphans. They came from various orphanages in the Saigon area. Those agencies who put children on the airplane are attempting to compile lists, but none was available as of 6 April 1975." (TAB 40) The Accident Investigation Board was also given the name of Dorothy Howard, a USDAO employee who was not listed on the manifest given to the crew, but was known to be a passenger aboard C-5A 218 upon its departure from Saigon.

15. Prior to departure from Tan Son Nhut, normal pre-flight planning was accomplished. A takeoff weight of 464,000 pounds and fuel weight of 96,200 pounds was computed. (TAB 75) A clearance was filed via Track 4, Casong, PE-9, R-68, Lubang, T-23, Clark AB. (TAB 74) After the onload of passengers and satisfactory indications of a locked aft loading complex, (TABS 4, 8, 11 and 81) the engines were started and a TRT (maximum power) rolling takeoff was subsequently made at 0803Z (1603 local/4 April) on Runway 07R.

16. After takeoff, a right-hand turn was initiated and the aircraft proceeded directly to Vung Tau. (See TAB 77, Map, Route of Flight) The aircraft passed Vung Tau at 0812 (1612 local), climbing through 20,000 feet. All indicators on the flight deck were normal for takeoff and climb. At 0815Z (1615 local), a rapid decompression occurred without warning as the aircraft was climbing through 23,300 feet, with air-speed of 254 knots and a heading of 136 degrees. The aircrew donned oxygen masks and established interphone contact. Immediately following the decompression, the number one and number two hydraulic systems were lost including pressure and fluid quantity. Additionally, the pilot noted that the rudder pedal kicked hard right but the aircraft did not yaw and the control column chattered momentarily. The pedals were centered with no reaction. Approximately 45 seconds after the decompression, a shallow descending left turn was begun for an emergency return to Saigon. (See statements of crew members)

17. As the damage was being assessed, the pilot realized he had no pitch control. He asked the copilot to assist him with the pitch. However, the copilot's pitch was also

inoperative. All pitch trim, elevator and rudder cables had been severed at the time of rapid decompression. During the descent, the airspeed increased to 300 knots, the nose of the aircraft began to rise and the airspeed began to rapidly decrease. To prevent the aircraft from entering the stall speed range, a right bank of 30-40 degrees was made and power reduced. The aircraft then entered a steep dive. The wings were leveled and the pilot observed a rapid increase in airspeed. Realizing that his only means of pitch control was power and bank, he added power to avert the dive. As the airspeed increased through 326 knots, the nose of the aircraft began to rise. From this point on the pilot developed techniques for some limited control of pitch through continuous use of power and bank and established a controllable rate of descent at 250-260 knots. (See statements of crew members)

18. The initial assessment of damage by the crew revealed that the aft pressure door, a large portion of the aft ramp, and aft center cargo door had departed the aircraft. Initially, both aft side cargo doors were observed to be attached to the aircraft but subsequent observations revealed the right-hand aft side cargo door was missing. A large portion of the sloping torque deck was missing and numerous cables were separated and hanging from the remaining torque deck area immediately aft of the pressure bulkhead. (See statements of crew members)

19. An emergency was declared and the aircrew was briefed to prepare for an emergency landing at Tan Son Nhut. At this time, aircrew and medical crew personnel became aware that a crash landing was a possibility. The six medical crew and three flight crew members in the troop compartment, maintaining complete composure, carefully checked the seat belts, pillows and blankets of each infant to insure maximum security. After that was accomplished, these nine crew members and the seven "escorts" in the troop compartment sat or laid in the aisles or between the seats, since the seats in the troop compartment were fully occupied by infants. Four medical crew and seven flight crew members comforted and prepared the passengers in the cargo compartment for possible crash landing. (See statements of crew members)

20. The undivided attention of the pilots was directed to aircraft control. While the pilot, Captain Traynor, maintained power requirements, the copilot, Captain Harp, flew the ailerons. In order to ascertain the approach pitch and power requirements at the earliest time, extension of the landing gear was initiated at approximately 10,000 feet and 260 knots. The aircraft commander called for the "Gear Down, Before Landing Checklist." The forward main landing gear extended normally. The nose gear was extended by use of the emergency extend switch. The aft main gear was then extended using the emergency extend switches. The aircraft had previously been placed on a heading of 310 degrees to position it for a VFR final to Runway 25L at Tan Son Nhut.

Approaching 6 nautical miles from the end of the runway, approximately 4,000 feet mean sea level and 230 knots air-speed, a shallow 15 degree bank left turn was begun for landing. Approximately one-half way through the turn, the aircraft nosed down at a rapid rate. Seeing that they would be unable to reach the runway, the pilots rolled the wings level and applied power to the full throttle capability. All landing gear was noted in the down and locked position by the flight engineer. Immediately prior to impact, the pilot retarded the throttle to idle. The aircraft touched down at 0830Z (1630 local) on its main landing gear in a marshy area, in use as a rice paddy, approximately 2 nautical miles northeast of the runway. The aircraft was in a slightly left wing low, level flight attitude with an airspeed above 269 knots. It rolled and skidded along the ground for approximately 1,000 feet and became airborne. The aircraft continued in flight for approximately 2700 feet during which time the Saigon River was crossed. The second impact was on the western bank of the river at which time the aircraft skidded and began to tear and shed parts. After approximately 1200 feet of travel the aircraft separated into four major sections; empennage, flight deck, troop compartment and entire wing section. These sections assumed different trajectories and came to rest in separate locations. The cargo compartment totally disintegrated as the aircraft progressed down the touchdown path. (See statements of crew members; TAB 78, Impact and Wreckage Map; TAB 79, Wreckage Diagram and TAB 80, Photographs)

21. That portion of the flight deck just forward of the courier compartment came to rest in an almost totally inverted position on its right side (TAB 80). There was no fire. Four of the crew in the cockpit at the time of impact - the pilot, copilot, a flight engineer and a third pilot - exited through the pilot's left window. The navigator, who had been in the cockpit, escaped through a hole in the relief crew area, as did other crew members - a second navigator, a flight engineer and two loadmasters who had been in the relief crew area at the time of impact. These nine crew members suffered only very minor injuries. (See statements of crew members and TAB 80)

22. The troop compartment, in its entirety, came to rest in an upright position, reasonably well intact both inside and out after skidding over 1,000 feet. There was no fire. (TAB 80)

23. The primary wing structure and the pylons remained intact until the final separation of the aircraft when they came to rest at the farthest point forward in the wreckage path in an inverted position. (See statements of crew members and TAB 80, Photographs)

24. Rescue activity was immediate. The nine crew members (paragraph 21 above) who had escaped from the inverted flight deck, quickly proceeded across the marshy area to the upright troop compartment where the two aft emergency exits had already

been opened by members of the flight and medical crews therein. All crew members and civilian escorts then worked together, some despite painful injuries of their own, to evacuate the infant children from the troop compartment through the emergency exits to an area outside the compartment. (See statements of crew members)

25. At the time of the crash landing, several Air America and Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) helicopters were in the immediate area and within five minutes a number of helicopters converged on the accident scene. They immediately began shuttling survivors to Tan Son Nhut Air Base where they were subsequently taken to the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital and other hospitals in the Saigon area. The helicopter rescue operation was completed in one and one-half hours. (See statements of crew members)

26. A representative from the Casualty Services Branch, Air Force Military Personnel Center, Randolph AFB, Texas (CWO W-4 Leo F. Scott) attempted to determine the number and category of persons aboard C-5A 218 upon its departure from Saigon and the number and category of survivors/fatalities as a result of the accident. He compiled data from crew testimony, existing manifests and discussions with both the Joint Casualty Resolution Center Liaison Office (JCRC) in Saigon and Army Pathologists at Camp Samae Sam, Thailand. His report is attached at TAB 45. He estimated that there were 330 persons aboard C-5A 218 upon departure from Saigon, with 155 fatalities and 175 survivors.

27. Evidence which was not available at the time of Mr. Scott's report, but which is the best evidence available at the time of this writing, demonstrates that there were in fact 314 persons aboard C-5A 218 upon departure from Saigon and that of that total, 138 perished as a result of the accident, leaving 176 survivors. The totals are arrived at as follows:

a. Crew Members - 29 Air Force crew members were aboard to include 16 flight crew, 10 medical crew, two photographers and a MAC Mission Observer. An exhibit found at TAB 55 has been compiled to identify the entire crew, their locations both at the time of rapid decompression and at impact and their injuries. The testimony of the surviving crew members may be found at TABS 3 through 20. DD Forms 1300, Report of Casualty, for each of the 11 deceased crew members may be found at TAB 46.

b. Passengers Other Than Vietnamese Children - There were 56 passengers aboard who did not fall into the category of crew members or Vietnamese children. Of the 56, 48 perished, leaving eight survivors.

(1) Eight of the 56 were third country nationals: five Germans, two Australians and one Malaysian. None survived.

Their identities and nationalities are shown at TAB 50, which also contains Department of the Army Forms 3565, Certificate of Death (Overseas) for the eight third country nationals.

(2) The remaining 48 passengers were U. S. Nationals, 40 of whom were fatalities.

(a) Of the 40 fatalities, 35 were Department of Defense personnel employed by the United States Defense Attache Office, Saigon. Copies of Travel Orders (DD Form 1610), directing departure from Saigon on or about 4 April 1975, for 30 of the 35 may be found at TAB 41. The purpose of travel stated in the orders is "To direct employee to escort Vietnamese orphans out of Vietnam on Humanitarian Flight to the United States." Copies of the Travel Orders of the remaining five USDAO fatalities (Helen Drye, Marilyn P. Eichen, Vera S. Hollibaugh, Barbara J. Kavulia and Orin J. Poulton) were not located, although evidence derived from interviews with USDAO personnel officers indicated that Travel Orders were issued to those five in the same format as those described for the 30 above. Department of the Army Forms 3565, Certificate of Death (Overseas), for the 35 USDAO employees may be found at TAB 47.

(b) The remaining five U. S. National fatalities included the dependent wife (Nova L. Bell) and 10 year old son (Michael E. Bell) of U. S. Army E-7 Garnett E. Bell, assigned to USDAO (See Travel Order, TAB 42, which specifies the purpose of travel is "To evacuate dependent(s) and to permit dependent to escort Vietnamese orphans out of Vietnam on an Humanitarian Flight to the United States"); Rohn F. Drye III, dependent son of USDAO employee, Helen Drye (also a fatality, see above) (no Travel Order located); Marta Moschkin, dependent wife of Utschur Moschkin, a USDAO employee, who was not aboard the aircraft (see Travel Order at TAB 44); and Laurie Stark, adult daughter of Dr. Merrit W. Stark, a Public Health Physician assigned to the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and stationed with that agency in Saigon. (See TAB 25 for Dr. Stark's testimony) Dr. Stark, who was officially aboard the aircraft as a medical advisor (See TAB 43, Travel Order) and who was one of the eight U. S. National survivors, requested his daughter, who apparently had no official dependent status in Vietnam, to "serve as an escort on this flight," which she did. Department of the Army Form 3565, Certificate of Death (Overseas), for the first four named fatalities can be found at TAB 48. The Special Consular Services Branch of the State Department has indicated that their Form FS-192, Report of Death of an American Citizen, will be issued to reflect the death of Laurie Stark.

(3) The eight United States National survivors were Dr. Merrit W. Stark; Thelma L. Thompson, USDAO civilian employee (see Statement at TAB 21); Linda Adams, 18 year old dependent daughter of deceased USDAO employee, Barbara L.

Adams (see testimony at TAB 24); Theresa Drye, 17 year old dependent daughter of deceased USDAO employee, Helen Drye, whose brother, Rohn III was also killed (see transcript of interview at TAB 23); Andrea C. Bell, 5 year old dependent daughter of Army E-7 Garnett E. Bell, whose mother, Nova and brother, Michael, were killed; Kunsang Moschkin, 9 year old dependent son of USDAO employee, Utschur Moschkin, whose mother Marta, was killed; Susan Elizabeth Derge, 19 year old daughter of Esso Eastern employee, R. P. Derge (see statement at TAB 22); and Christine Leivermann, 23 year old nurse employed by "Friends for All Children" in Saigon with an office in the United States at Boulder, Colorado. (See Statement at TAB 26)

c. Vietnamese Children

(1) As was stated in paragraph 14 above, no manifest of Vietnamese children was ever presented to the crew of C-5A 218. After the accident, personnel of the American Embassy, Saigon attempted to confirm the number and identity of the Vietnamese children aboard the flight, but were unsuccessful. The Boulder, Colorado headquarters of "Friends for All Children", a child placement agency, was contacted by the Investigating Officer since it appeared that a number of the children had come from institutions in Saigon which were affiliated with their organization. (See TABS 22, 25 and 26) On 23 July 1975 information was received from the Director of the agency, Wende I. Grant, which indicates that the affiliates of "Friends for All Children" in Saigon placed a total of 228 children aboard the aircraft, of which 150 survived and 78 perished. (See TAB 52) It should be noted that two of the children who perished, namely David Bui and Michael Bui, were in fact children of German National, Theodora Bui, and have been categorized as third country nationals in paragraph 27b(1) above. (See also TAB 49) Of the 150 survivors, 9 were injured; however, the extent of their injuries are unknown and likely to remain so.

(2) The day following the accident the bodies of all of the deceased were flown to U-Tapao Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand and turned over to the U. S. Army Mortuary Thailand at nearby Camp Samae Sam, where the task of identification of remains was accomplished. Information received from the Disposition Program Director, Army Directorate of Memorial Affairs, Washington, D.C., indicates that Army pathologists identified the remains of 81 Vietnamese children, to include David and Michael Bui. (See TAB 51 for Department of the Army Forms 3565, Certificate of Death (Overseas) for 79 Vietnamese children; Certificates of Death for David and Michael Bui are found at TAB 50)

(3) In attempting to determine the number of Vietnamese national children survivors/fatalities, Mr. Scott relied (a) upon the testimony of Sergeant Philip R. Wise, a medical technician and one of the few survivors of those on

board in the cargo compartment at the time of the accident; and (b) upon the information he received from Army pathologists at Camp Samae Sam who reported they had what appeared to be the remains of 93 children. (See TAB 45, Scott's report)

(4) In my 17 April 1975 interview with Sgt Wise at the USAF Hospital, Clark Air Base, a verbatim transcript of which may be found at TAB 20, he testified that there were no children in the cargo compartment, only adults (see TAB 20, pp 4 and 5), "well over a hundred" (page 6) although "there could have been small little kids", he doesn't "remember seeing any" (page 7). In light of the injuries he received as a result of the accident and considering his demeanor and the manner in which he answered questions, I have concluded that his testimony with regard to the number and category of passengers in the cargo compartment is not reliable.

(5) Subsequent information received from Army pathologists at Camp Samae Sam indicate that although 93 remains bags thought to contain the bodies of 93 Vietnamese children were originally received from Saigon, the identification process demonstrated that in fact the 93 bags contained the remains of 81 children.

28. The aircrew was briefed on weather at 2101Z, 3 April 1975 by the Clark Duty Weather Forecaster. The weather was briefed as visual meteorological conditions (VMC) with no significant weather from Clark to 112 degrees East; isolated thunderstorms and associated weather, tops at FL 400 from 112 degrees East to 110 degrees East; no significant weather from 110 degrees East to Saigon; landing weather at Saigon was forecasted to be 4000 feet scattered, 13,000 feet broken, 28,000 feet broken, visibility 7 miles, wind direction at 340 degrees at 8 knots; altimeter 29.79. The crew called via pilot-metro service for a re-brief at 0150Z, 4 April 1975. Minimum changes were given in arrival weather but enroute weather was not changed. On the flight to Saigon the weather encountered was essentially as briefed except that the cirrus associated with the isolated thunderstorms off the coast was more dense than expected and light turbulence was experienced at FL 310 while in instrument meteorological conditions from 112 degrees East to 110 degrees East. On the return flight to Clark the takeoff weather was 2600 feet scattered, 4000 feet scattered, 30,000 feet broken, visibility 7 miles, wind direction from 130 degrees at 14 knots, altimeter 29.79. There were isolated towering cumulus between Saigon and the coast but the aircraft was in visual meteorological conditions from takeoff until impact. Saigon weather at impact was 2600 feet scattered, 30,000 feet broken, visibility 7 miles, wind direction from 120 degrees at 15 knots, altimeter 29.76. Crew interviews and an analysis of meteorological information (See TAB 37) demonstrate that weather was not a factor in the events leading up to the rapid decompression or in the attempted recovery of the aircraft. (See also TAB 76)

29. Examination of the records of the crew members aboard C-5A 218 at the time of the accident demonstrates that the primary crew members were current and fully qualified in their flying duties in accordance with Air Force and

Military Airlift Command directives. (AFM 60-1 and MAC Supplement thereto and MACR 51-1, 51-5 and 60-1). Additionally, those crew members who were flying in an authorized student status were under the proper supervision of currently qualified instructor personnel. Further, interviews with the crew and a review of AF Forms 1042 "Medical Recommendation for Flying Duties" indicate that all crew members were in good health, on no medication and with no irregularities during the 72 hour period preceding the accident. (See TABS 56 through 70 for pertinent flight records of crew members and TAB 35, Statement of Major DiFerdinando.)

30. Because of the political situation in South Vietnam at the time of the accident and thereafter there was no way to achieve complete security of the accident site. While security was provided against the Viet Cong, there was no security against pilferage, which had begun immediately after the crash and continued at a tremendously high rate. The Aircraft Accident Investigation Team reported that their initial survey of the site revealed that the aircraft avionics and communications equipment had been removed from the aircraft and the crash site by the local populace. Additionally, Vietnamese civilians were continually in the process of removing remaining pieces of wreckage. Attempts to prevent the removal of wreckage met with resistance. In an effort to retrieve as many aircraft components as possible, three programs were implemented.

a. United States Navy assistance was requested in locating aircraft components that departed the aircraft at the time of rapid decompression which occurred over water. As a result of Naval efforts, a piece of the torque deck frame was recovered on 20 April; a part of the actuating mechanism for the pressure door toes and left-hand radius driver arm for the aft center cargo door was recovered on 24 April; two cargo roller sets normally mounted on the ramp as well as the ramp cargo winch were recovered on 25 April; both a 20 ft by 12 ft by 4 ft section of the aft ramp and a 7 ft by 12 ft section of the pressure door were recovered on 26 April. Salvage operations were terminated on 27 April.

b. Funds were obtained in an attempt to purchase or "buy back" components that had been pilfered from the crash site by Vietnamese locals. Handbills depicting aircraft components and avionics components were developed and distributed among the local populace. The handbills offered monetary awards for return of components. On 19 April, the Maintenance Data Recorder (MDR) tape was recovered by this method. The effectiveness of this program was limited due to the fall of the South Vietnamese government.

c. Further digging and probing of the crash site was accomplished and several components were recovered. When it became evident that no further components were to be found



and military activity was beginning to increase, the remaining wreckage was abandoned on 19 April.

The aircraft components were returned to Clark AB where they were crated and on 20 April 1975 were shipped by air to the San Antonio Air Logistics Center, Kelly Air Force Base, Texas for laboratory analysis. (See TAB 33, Statement of Captain Bixler)

31. Interviews and statements of the flight crew demonstrate that a security watch was established during the time the aircraft was on the ground at Tan Son Nhut. Additionally, the aircraft was inspected by crew members prior to its departure for explosive devices and none were found. Further, crew members stated that prior to the rapid decompression they neither heard nor saw anything that might be associated with an explosive; but, on the contrary, testified that what they heard and felt was identical to the sound and feel of prior rapid decompressions which they had experienced during training in the altitude chamber. There is also no evidence that the decompression had occurred as a result of the detonation of an explosive device contained in the passengers' baggage. There is no evidence that the aircraft had taken ground fire during departure, and at the time of the rapid decompression it had departed the area of small arms effectiveness.

32. On three separate occasions, Air Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) personnel searched the accident site for evidence of explosive detonations as follows:

a. On 5 April 1975 an EOD team from the 635 Munitions Maintenance Squadron, U-Tapao AB, Thailand failed to uncover any damage that may have been caused by an explosive.

b. On 5 April 1975 another EOD team from the 3 Munitions Maintenance, Clark AB arrived and searched the area with negative findings.

c. A third search of the area was made by 3 Munitions Maintenance Squadron EOD personnel on 6 April 1975 with the assistance of an explosive detector dog, also with negative results.

33. All aircraft components which were airlifted to Clark AB were checked at that location by a detector dog and by two other detector dogs upon their arrival at San Antonio Air Logistics Center, Kelly AFB, Texas. At the latter location the dogs alerted on 3 components which were subsequently sent to the FBI laboratory for an analysis which proved negative. (for paragraphs 31, 32 and 33 see TAB 34, Statement of MSgt Johnson and also TAB 87, Laboratory reports and other materials concerning explosive damage.)

34. Data from the Maintenance Data Recorder (MDR) tape of C-5A 218, recovered as a result of the "Buy Back" program described in paragraph 30b above, was transmitted to the Central Data Bank at the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center. Ground Processing System (GPS) Program 67220, Flight Segment Parameter Listing (FSPL), was then extracted for use in verifying operational conditions of the aircraft on the flight legs prior to the accident and until the time of the accident itself. An analysis of GPS Program 67220 FSPL revealed that the aircraft had been operating normally since departure from Travis AFB on 1 April 1975 until arrival at Saigon on 4 April. No unusual maintenance malfunctions that could be related to a rapid decompression or aft ramp system failure were recorded. Critical engine, flight control, air frame and aircraft system parameters all indicated normal operations. Further analysis of the program revealed that climbout of the aircraft from Tan Son Nhut was normal with all engines operating within limits. Approximately 12 minutes after takeoff with the aircraft in climb power, all engine parameters within limits, at an air speed of .610 mach and an altitude of 23,424 feet, the reported rapid decompression occurred and hydraulic pressure to the pitch and yaw augmentation systems was lost. Almost immediately afterwards hydraulic pressure to the lateral augmentation system was lost, the aircraft began descending and extremely erratic throttle usage was recorded. Further, airspeed was continually increasing and decreasing in direct relationship to throttle manipulation, verifying the testimony of the flight crew that descent of the aircraft was being controlled through use of engine power. 14 minutes after rapid decompression (27 minutes after takeoff) program analysis indicates loss of power to the MDR and no subsequent recordings. The aircraft, at that time, was at 537 feet pressure altitude which was the same altitude recorded at takeoff. (See TAB 88)

35. An analysis of the historical records of C-5A 218 reveals that it was the 21st aircraft produced by the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation. The aircraft was originally delivered to Charleston AFB, South Carolina, on 5 September 1970 and was subsequently transferred to Travis AFB on 22 January 1972. The aircraft entered depot update maintenance at Lockheed-Georgia Company on 21 September 1974 and was redelivered to Travis AFB on 19 December 1974. There were no recorded flights between 20 December 1974 and 2 January 1975. During January 1975, the aircraft logged 8 sorties and 33.1 hours flown; for February, the totals were 14 and 74.2; for March, 10 and 47.8; and for April 6 and 29.4. Total airframe hours on C-5A 218, up to the time of the accident, were 2388.5 and total landings 1109.

36. All AFTO Forms 781A, Maintenance Discrepancy and Work Document, as well as associated maintenance data for the period 29 January 1975 through the date of the accident (AFTO Forms 781A for 31 March 1975 through date of accident are at TAB 89) were reviewed for significant maintenance discrepancies or maintenance actions on components of the aft cargo loading system of C-5A 218. This review was made

in light of the sworn testimony of 11 members of the flight crew of the aircraft and 35 metallurgical analysis reports concerning parts recovered from C-5A 218, accomplished by the San Antonio Air Logistics Center Metallurgical Laboratory (Air Force Logistics Command), Kelly Air Force Base, Texas. (See paragraph 37, following) Expert maintenance testimony establishes that there were three significant entries reflected in the AFTO Forms 781A that could be related to the aft cargo loading system failure. (See TAB 36) They are as follows:

a. Removal of a tie rod assembly between #2 and #3 right aft cargo ramp locks (hook bellcranks #2 and #3) on 16 March 1975 for use in another aircraft and subsequent replacement of that part, which was obtained from a third aircraft, on 24 March 1975 (see TABS 30, 32 and 90).

b. Removal of a tie rod assembly between #3 and #4 right aft cargo ramp locks (hook bellcranks #3 and #4) on 16 March 1975 for use in another aircraft and subsequent replacement of that part, which was obtained from a third aircraft, on 24 March 1975 (see TABS 30, 32 and 90).

c. The requirement for a rig check of the aft ramp locks as a result of the replacement of tie rod assemblies between hook bellcranks #2 and 3 and 3 and 4 (a and b above). Since at the time of replacement of the tie rod assemblies the hydraulic systems were inoperative, the rig check requirement could not be accomplished on 24 March, but was subsequently cleared on 29 March 1975. (See TABS 29, 31, 91 and 92)

37. Various part of the aft ramp, aft ramp locking mechanism, empennage flight control cables, and tail section hydraulic lines, which were recovered as described in paragraph 30 above, were submitted to the Metallurgical Laboratory, San Antonio Air Logistics Center, for metallurgical analysis. It should be noted that all components of the above systems were not submitted since they were not recovered. This is especially true of the aft ramp locking system where less than half of the components were finally recovered. TAB 94 contains 35 reports prepared by the Metallurgical Laboratory which reflects the results of their metallurgical analysis. A summary of these reports may be found at TAB 95.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

38. At the time of rapid decompression, the crew was faced with multiple system failures resulting in a catastrophic situation. Technical Order guidance does not address an emergency of the magnitude involved. Loss of pitch and yaw control resulted in an essentially uncontrollable vehicle. The aircraft commander made two major decisions which exhibited outstanding judgment, timely analysis, innovativeness and pilotage skills and which allowed for a semi-controlled crash landing and the survival of the majority of the passengers and crew.

a. During the initial loss of pitch control, the pilots determined that very basic aerodynamics would be necessary to control the aircraft and that the only way to stop the rapidly descending, accelerating aircraft was to add power in order to provide a pitch up moment. The stabilizer trim (.5 nose down) was set for 254 knots and therefore the aircraft was seeking that airspeed as its point of pitch stability. The power application, even though foreign to normal procedures when accelerating to a higher airspeed, insured that the aircraft would again have a pitch up moment. These techniques, along with banking the aircraft, were developed and used by the crew to regain limited pitch control.

b. Halfway through the turn to final approach, the pilots observed a rapid drop in the nose of the aircraft. Recognizing they were not going to be able to reach the runway, they elected to roll the wings level and land straight ahead. This extremely important decision, along with full application of power, in order to arrest the rate of descent, again alien to normal pilot reaction, resulted in a lower rate of vertical velocity immediately prior to impact and greatly enhanced the survival potential of those aboard. (See TABS 35 and 84)

39. In a ceremony at Travis Air Force Base on 21 July 1975, Air Force Crosses were awarded to Captain Traynor, the aircraft commander and Captain Harp, the copilot, for extraordinary heroism and airmanship while engaged in a humanitarian mission on 4 April 1975. Distinguished Flying Crosses were awarded to Captain Malone, copilot; Captain Langford, navigator; Senior Master Sergeants Perkins and Snedegar, loadmasters; and Master Sergeant McAtee and Technical Sergeant Engles, flight engineers, for extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight on 4 April 1975. (See press report, TAB 85)

40. No specific rigging, adjusting or operational checking instructions for tie rod installation are provided in Technical Order 1C-5A-2-12. Paragraph 3-81b of the Aft Ramp Lock Subsystem Installation instructions states, "Rig aft ramp locks in accordance with rigging instructions provided in Figure 3-44". Paragraph 3-168, Aft Ramp Rigging Instructions, includes 3-44. Paragraph 3-168d states, "Instructions are sequenced for complete ramp rigging. If a particular maintenance effort requires performance of only a portion of the rigging procedure, use the following tabulation to isolate the applicable steps." This following tabulation does not contain steps for checking, rigging or adjusting the tie rods that had been replaced on 24 March 1975 (see paragraph 36 above). Considering the lack of specific tie rod rigging and adjustment instructions in Technical Order 1C-5A-2-12 the actions of maintenance personnel became a matter of personal judgment and experience. As such the maintenance personnel involved decided to use the guidance contained in Paragraph 3-173, Aft Ramp Mechanical

Rigging Verification, to verify the proper rigging and adjustment of the tie rods (See TABS 29 and 31). While the title of paragraph 3-173 may well indicate that accomplishing the instructions of that particular paragraph would verify that the ramp locking system is properly rigged, in fact such accomplishment would not verify that all adjustments, measurements, pull forces and over center positions are correct, as required by the total ramp rigging procedures contained in paragraph 3-168, "Aft Ramp Rigging Instructions." (See TAB 93)

41. Visual observation of the recovered components together with the results of the 35 metallurgical laboratory analysis reports referred to in paragraph 36 above, confirm a failure sequence wherein the aft ramp came loose from the right side. (All directions are from the aft of the aircraft looking forward.) The ramp was then torn right to left across the front of ramp station (RS) 33 bulkhead and rotated downward from its normal horizontal position to a near vertical position about the left side locking system before departing the aircraft.

a. The above failure sequence is supported by observation of the failure pattern of the recovered left hand side ramp locking hardware (floor brackets and yoke assemblies). All left hand floor brackets and yokes failed in a manner that indicates they were carrying load and the ramp rotated about a hinge line formed by these seven locks. Laboratory analysis of the recovered right side ramp locking hardware, in lock positions 4, 5 and 7 revealed failure due to excessive overload in the vertical direction. The hardware from lock positions 2, 3 and 6 were in good condition and the laboratory analysis of this hardware did not reveal signs of excessive overload. The hardware from lock position 1 was not recovered.

b. This evidence indicates that some of the right side locks were not carrying their share of the load. The direction of failure of the locks that were carrying load places the ramp in the normal horizontal position at the start of the failure sequence. In addition, the ramp rotation is confirmed by visual evidence found on the exterior skin of the recovered mating ramp to fuselage sloping longeron section. This evidence consisted of scratches on the fuselage skin that match button head fasteners that are on the ramp floor. In order to cause scratches on the fuselage skin, the ramp would have had to rotate approximately 90 degrees about the left side locking system. This also supports the sequence of initiation occurring in the right side locking system of the ramp. Additionally, the laboratory analysis of the fracture surfaces at ramp station (RS) 33 support the direction of ramp tearing from right to left. (See TAB 95, Letter from SAALC)

42. Evidence derived from visual and laboratory analyses does not conclusively demonstrate a definite point or exact cause of failure initiation. The evidence does, however, point in the direction of a "most probable" cause that supports the failure progression, referred to in paragraph 41 above, involving the numbers 1, 2 and 3 right side locking mechanisms as follows: A sudden dumping of the load from numbers 1, 2 and 3 locks on the BL 84 ramp hinge could cause a simultaneous compressive failure of the hinge and failure of the lower beam cap at ramp station (RS) 33. This is supported by the laboratory analysis of the BL 84 hinge. The remaining load carrying locks on the right side (4, 5 and 7) failed in overload and the ramp was forced down from the right, tearing completely across at the RS 33 bulkhead. (See TAB 95, Letter from SAALC)

43. Since the pressure door is attached to the ramp, its motion was influenced by the ramp movements. Visual inspection of the recovered parts verify a downward right to left rotating of the pressure door. It is assumed that the pressure door struck the sloping torque deck area of the aircraft fuselage, causing the empennage flight control cables and hydraulic lines for systems 1 and 2 to separate, which in turn caused the loss of all empennage flight controls, i.e., pitch trim, elevator and rudder systems. The laboratory failure analysis of these items supports this type of sequence, although not conclusively. (TAB 95, Letter from SAALC)

44. While the laboratory evidence conclusively establishes that fatigue failure was not a factor in any of the components that were analyzed, evidence was derived that indicate a stress-corrosion problem with the bellcranks. However, expert testimony reveals that a situation can exist where the hook tip impinges on the bottom side of the yoke shaft during the locking sequence. If that be the case, the hook tip is set on a hair trigger unstable arrangement where it can slip into either the locked or the unlocked position, depending on just where the hook tip has engaged the yoke shaft. When the hook tip does slip into either the locked or unlocked condition, there is a dynamic shock release of the binding force that is transmitted into the bellcrank. This sudden shock impact can be of sufficient magnitude to crack the bellcrank in the identical manner and in the same location as those bellcranks recovered from C-5A 218 and subsequently subjected to metallurgical analysis. If this situation occurs, and the bellcranks are not inspected, a cracked condition in the bellcrank would go unnoticed. In time, the surfaces of the crack would then be exposed to corrosion. This corrosion and resulting discoloration of the cracked surfaces could easily be misinterpreted as stress-corrosion and the evidence of the overload failure would be reduced due to the corrosion effects. In view of the above, the evidence of stress-corrosion is inconclusive. (TAB 95, Letter from SAALC)

45. On 12 June 1975, a "Summary Report of C-5A Accident," based upon the Report of Investigation of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Board convened under Air Force Regulation 127-4, was publicly released by the Air Force. The text of the "Summary Report" may be found at TAB 97 and a press account at TAB 98.

46. At this writing, six lawsuits arising out of the accident are known to have been filed against Lockheed Aircraft Corporation. The summary of the pleadings in these six actions may be found at TAB 99.

47. At this writing, five claims arising out of the accident are known to have been asserted and are being processed under the provisions of 10 USC 2733, Military Claims Act (Chapter 7, AFM 112-1) as follows:

a. Susan Derge v. U.S., QD/XDAT/75-00904/N: Claim presented for personal injury in the amount of \$50,000 and for loss of personal property in the amount of \$3,068.80. The claim was forwarded from Hq 22AF/JA to Hq MAC/JA on 28 July 1975.

b. Darwin E. Maier v. U. S., QD/XDAT/76-00057/N: Claim presented for wrongful death of claimant's wife, a DOD civilian employee, in the amount of \$1,950,000 and for loss of personal property in the amount of \$5,011.00. The claims file was received by Hq 22AF/JA for review on 29 July 1975, and was forwarded to Hq MAC/JA on 31 July 1975.

c. Garnett E. Bell v. U. S., QD/XDAT/76-00085/N: Claim for \$1,500,000 for alleged severe spinal injuries was filed by Garnett E. Bell on behalf of his daughter, Andrea C. Bell, age 5. The file was forwarded to Hq 22AF/JA for processing on 1 August 1975 by the Claims Office, Los Angeles Air Force Station. Extensive investigation will be required, including a review of medical records before the file can be forwarded.

d. Garnett E. Bell and Andrea C. Bell v. U. S., QD/XDAT/76-00093/N: Claim for \$3,000,000 for wrongful death of Mrs. Nova L. Bell (wife of Garnett E. Bell) and her son, Michael Bell, age 10. The file was forwarded by Los Angeles Air Force Station Claims Office on 1 August 1975 and will be forwarded to Hq MAC/JA following valuation of the wrongful death claims which should be completed in the near future.

e. Merrit W. Stark v. U. S., QT/PPBXUR/75-01295/N: Claim presented for wrongful death of claimant's daughter, Laurie Jean Stark, non-government connected U. S. citizen, in the amount of \$125,000 and for loss of personal property in the amount of \$1500.00. Claim was filed at Bolling AFB, Washington, D.C., on 16 June 1975 and has not yet been received by Headquarters 22 Air Force.

## V. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

48. USAF Aircraft C-5A Serial Number 68-218 crash landed 2 nautical miles northeast of Runway 25L, Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Vietnam at 0830Z (1630 local) 4 April 1975.

49. During climbout, the aft pressure door and ramp departed the aircraft causing hydraulic lines and flight control cables to the empennage section of the aircraft to be severed. Because of the lack of any normal pitch control system, the pilot had extremely limited control of the aircraft which resulted in a crash landing and total aircraft destruction.

50. As a result of the accident, 138 of the 314 persons aboard the aircraft were fatally injured, to include 11 U. S. Air Force crew members; 40 U. S. citizens (35 Department of Defense civilian employees of the United States Defense Attache Office, Saigon and 5 others to include 2 dependent wives, 2 dependent children and 1 private citizen); 79 Vietnamese National children; and 8 third country nationals (5 German, 2 Australian, 1 Malaysian). The total of those who survived is 176, to include 18 crew members; 8 U. S. citizens (2 U. S. Government civilian employees, 4 dependent children and 2 private citizens); and 150 Vietnamese National children.

51. The records of the crew members aboard C-5A 218 disclose that the primary crew members were current and fully qualified in their flying duties in accordance with applicable directives. Those crew members who were flying in an authorized student status were under the proper supervision of currently qualified instructor personnel.

52. The aircraft commander faced with a catastrophic situation involving multiple system failures and resulting in an essentially uncontrollable vehicle, a situation which technical order guidance does not address, made two major decisions, both of which, exhibited exceptionally outstanding judgment and allowed for a semi-controlled crash landing and the survival of the majority of the passengers and the crew. The first decision was to add power in order to provide a pitch up moment to the rapidly descending, accelerating aircraft; and the second was to roll out and land straight ahead with full application of power halfway through the turn to final when it became evident that because of a rapid drop in the nose of the aircraft the runway could not be reached.

53. Witness testimony, visual and metallurgical evaluation of recovered components, explosive ordnance disposal analysis and FBI laboratory reports failed to disclose any evidence of sabotage, small arms ground fire, air burst or on-board explosives as a cause of the accident.



54. Analysis of the data derived from the Maintenance Data Recorder (MDR) tape revealed no significant maintenance malfunction that could be related to a rapid decompression or aft ramp system failure.

55. Maintenance records for the aircraft reflected three significant entries that could be related to the aft cargo loading system failure. They included removal on 16 March 1975 and subsequent replacement on 24 March 1975 of tie rod assemblies between #'s 2 and 3 and 3 and 4 right aft cargo ramp locks and the requirement for a rig check as a result thereof, which was performed on 29 March 1975.

56. The accomplishment of the instructions contained in paragraph 3-173, Aft Ramp Rigging Verification, Technical Order 1C-5A-2-12 would not necessarily verify that the ramp locking system is properly rigged, in that it would not necessarily verify that all adjustments, measurements, pull forces and over center positions are correct.

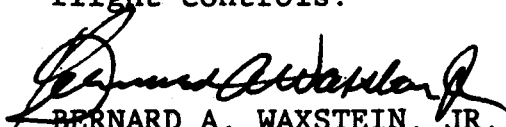
57. Visual observation of the recovered structural and mechanical components as well as laboratory analysis thereof confirm a failure sequence wherein the aft ramp came loose from the right side. The ramp was then torn right to left across the front of ramp station 33 bulkhead and rotated downward from its normal horizontal position to a near vertical position about the left side locking system before departing the aircraft.

58. Laboratory analysis of the failure pattern of the recovered left hand side ramp locking hardware (floor brackets and yoke assemblies) disclose that they were carrying load at the time of failure. Analysis of the recovered right side ramp locking hardware in lock positions 4, 5 and 7 revealed failure due to excessive overload in the vertical direction. The hardware from lock positions 2, 3 and 6 were in good condition and did not reveal signs of excessive overload.

59. The "most probable" cause of failure initiation is the sudden dumping of the load from numbers 1, 2 and 3 right side locks on the BL 84 ramp hinge, which in turn caused a simultaneous compressive failure of the hinge and failure of the lower beam cap at ramp station 33. This resulted in the remaining load carrying locks on the right side (4, 5 and 7) to fail in overload and the ramp was forced down from the right, tearing completely across at the ramp station 33 bulkhead.

60. The laboratory evidence conclusively establishes that fatigue failure was not a factor in any of the components analyzed. There was inconclusive evidence of a stress-corrosion problem with the bellcranks.

61. The movement of the ramp influenced the movement of the pressure door to which it is attached. Visual and laboratory evidence demonstrates, although not conclusively, a downward right to left rotating of the pressure door, which struck the sloping torque deck area of the fuselage, causing the empennage flight control cables and hydraulic lines for systems 1 and 2 to separate. This separation caused the loss of all pitch trim, elevator and rudder flight controls.



BERNARD A. WAXSTEIN, JR., Colonel, USAF  
Investigating Officer

15 AUG 1975

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**ORDER APPOINTING**

**COLLATERAL INVESTIGATING OFFICER**

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS MILITARY AIRLIFT COMMAND  
SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, ILLINOIS 62225

SPECIAL ORDER  
A-29

4 April 1975

COL BERNARD A WAXSTEIN, [REDACTED] FR, 22AF/JA, Travis AFB CA, is detailed to investigate the 4 April 1975 aircraft accident involving USAF C-5 acft No. 80218 which occurred approximately seven miles from Saigon, VN. The investigation will be conducted under the provisions of AFR 110-14, 1 Nov 73, as amended. Officer is auth to interview personnel, take statements and testimony, and examine records he deems appropriate. All records, files, and correspondence relative to the accident, within the control of the Air Force and not otherwise privileged or exempt by applicable directives, will be made available to the investigating officer. AFM 120-3, 20 Nov 69, will be used as a procedural guide. Report will be prepared IAW AFM 120-3, Chapter 11, and will include recommendations but a summary of the evidence will be prepared in lieu of findings.

FOR THE COMMANDER



HIRAM GRIFFIN, Colonel, USAF  
Director of Administration

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5 - HQ MAC/JA  
1 - HQ MAC/DAAO

A-29

AF REGULATION 110-14

DATED

1 NOVEMBER 19/3

1 November 1973

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Judge Advocate General Activities

NOV 2 1973

**COLLATERAL INVESTIGATIONS  
OF AIRCRAFT AND MISSILE ACCIDENTS**

This regulation tells when and how collateral investigations of aircraft and missile accidents are made. It applies to all persons who have the power to convene collateral investigations, and provides procedures to be followed by the investigating authority and by custodians of the records of the completed investigations.

1. Air Force Policy on the Investigation of Aircraft and Missile Mishaps. Aircraft and missile accident and incident investigations and reports under AFR 127-4 are safety investigations for the sole purpose of accident prevention; collateral investigations under this regulation are separate and apart from investigations under AFR 127-4, and are made to obtain and preserve all available evidence for use in claims, litigation, disciplinary action, and adverse administrative proceedings, and for all other purposes except for safety and accident prevention purposes. Investigations under AFR 127-4 take priority over other investigations in interviewing witnesses, obtaining and analyzing evidence, and inspecting the scene of the accident. Collateral investigations directed under this regulation may be conducted concurrently with, but may not interfere with, investigations under AFR 127-4. In this regard the following rules apply:

a. Members of the safety investigation board will not be assigned to conduct a collateral investigation of the same accident in any capacity.

b. No member of the collateral investigation board nor an officer assigned to conduct a single officer collateral investigation may attend the safety investigation board proceedings.

✓ Supersedes AFR 110-14, 29 February 1972.  
(For summary of revised, deleted, or added material, see signature page.)

OPR: JACL

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c. Witnesses may not testify in a collateral investigation until they have been released by the safety investigation board.

d. In the case of witnesses testifying in a collateral investigation, each witness must be advised fully of his constitutional rights or of the provisions of UCMJ, Article 31, as appropriate.

e. The statement or testimony reduced to writing or recorded electronically for the safety accident investigation board by a witness or by personnel involved in an accident may not be used or compared—either in whole or in part—by the board or officer conducting a collateral investigation. Testimony to the safety investigation board is given with the understanding that it cannot be used for other than accident prevention purposes, and witnesses are advised that it will be treated in confidence.

f. Under no circumstances may a witness who appeared before a safety investigation board, pursuant to AFR 127-4, be required to divulge what was contained in any statement or testimony he gave to such safety investigation board, nor what opinions, suggestions, recommendations, evaluations, analyses, discussions, conjectures, or speculations he gave to a safety investigation board. Furthermore, no witness can be required to give any findings, conclusions, recommendations, or cause factors contained in a safety investigation. These restrictions apply to any person who may have knowledge of the substance of a report of a safety investigation and who may be called as a witness before any other proceedings (such as a collateral investigation). It is imperative that all witnesses ap-

pearing before, or submitting testimony to, the board or officer conducting a collateral investigation be informed of the nature of the investigation and the possible uses of such testimony. This is to insure that they are fully aware of the differences between the two investigations.

② **Who Is Responsible for the Collateral Investigation.** The major commander with command responsibility under AFR 127-4 for the unit which had the mishap insures that the collateral investigation is made in appropriate cases. The commander who appoints the investigative board under AFR 127-4 normally appoints the investigating board or officer under this regulation.

a. If aircraft or personnel of two or more major commands are involved in the accident, major commanders coordinate as necessary to insure that the collateral investigation meets the requirements of the commands involved.

b. If the accident is in an area which prevents prompt investigation by the responsible major commander, he may request a major command with a unit nearer the location of the accident to direct the appointment of a board or officer to investigate the accident.

**3. When To Conduct a Collateral Investigation.** The commander who directs the safety investigation under AFR 127-4 also will direct a collateral investigation either by a board of officers or by a single officer when an Air Force aircraft or missile accident occurs anywhere, except when he determines, from the circumstances involved, that it is reasonably clear: (1) claims against the Government for private property damage will not exceed \$25,000, and (2) no litigation against the Government or a Government contractor (either present or former) may arise from the accident. If fatal or major injury occurs to any person as a result of an aircraft or missile accident, the likelihood of litigation must be assumed. In cases where litigation or claim is not considered likely, a collateral investigation may nevertheless be conducted as determined by the appointing authority or higher headquarters. *Note:* The terms "Air Force aircraft or missile accident" and "fatal or major injury" are intended to be synonymous with the terms as defined in AFR 127-4.

#### 4. Investigative Procedures:

a. Collateral investigations by boards of officers are guided by AFR 11-1. Reports will include recommendations encompassing any areas except safety and accident prevention and a factual summary of the evidence will be prepared in lieu of findings.

b. In single officer collateral investigations, investigating officers, when practicable, are senior to persons who may be the subject of disciplinary action or adverse administrative proceedings. Investigating officers are guided by AFM 120-3. Reports will include recommendations encompassing any areas except safety and accident prevention and a factual summary of the evidence will be prepared in lieu of findings.

c. If claims are anticipated, collateral investigations must meet the investigative requirements of AFM 112-1, chapter 4.

d. Collateral investigative boards and officers have access to all witnesses (including expert witnesses) and all relevant evidence, whether or not such witness and evidence are included in the AFR 127-4 investigation. Do not call as witnesses AFR 127-4 board members or advisors to testify as to any findings, recommendations, or deliberations of the aircraft or missile accident investigating board.

e. The investigating commander will insure that each collateral and safety accident investigating board president is aware of the following requirements for gathering factual material: whenever a safety board president obtains an original of a factual document, such as DD Form 365F, Weight and Balance Clearance Form F, or DD Form 175, Military Flight Plan, wreckage diagrams, maps, transcripts of air traffic communications, weather reports, maintenance records, photographs, etc., he will release the original document to the collateral board president after making copies for the safety accident report. Laboratory analysis reports and teardown reports prepared by Air Force agencies will be released to collateral boards. However, if such reports are prepared by the manufacturer or contractor of the aircraft or missile for the sole purpose of safety and accident prevention, they will not be released. If the safety accident board president is in possession of a copy of a factual document that is

also authorized for use in the collateral investigation, either he will give the collateral board president a copy of the document or inform him of the location of the original (if known) so that he may obtain the original or make copies from the original. The collateral board president will reciprocate in a like manner if he possesses the only copy of factual documents. Additionally, completed AF forms in the 711 series will not be furnished to the collateral board. (The same instructions apply if a board is not appointed and the safety or collateral investigation is conducted by an investigating officer.)

f. Information obtained by a safety accident investigating board as a result of combining, collating, or integrating the fragmentary information obtained from factual data with information obtained from witnesses or opinions, evaluations, conjecture, speculation, discussions, and suggestions are not factual material, and will not be released to a collateral board. Witnesses' statements, testimony, findings, conclusions, and recommendations will not be released to a collateral board or officer.

#### 5. Reports, Documents, and Wreckage:

a. Collateral investigation reports must contain the originals (or photographic or machine reproductions) of all documents relevant to the accident, including relevant aircraft maintenance records.

b. Prepare reports in five copies if claims are anticipated, or in two copies if no claim is anticipated. Also, prepare an extra copy for each additional major command with aircraft or personnel involved. After review and appropriate action by the appointing commander:

(1) File one copy of the report in the office of the staff judge advocate.

(2) Send the original report through channels to the major command. The original report will be filed in the office of the staff judge advocate of the major command. (For records disposition instructions, see AFM 12-50.)

(3) Send one copy of the report to any other major command involved.

(4) If claims are anticipated, send three copies of the report to the responsible claims officer.

c. The major commander insures that aircraft or missile wreckage is preserved for use as evidence for as long as a requirement for it exists.

d. The major command having the original is the only disclosure authority to release collateral investigation reports or any information contained therein outside the Air Force, but before such release is made coordination with the Litigation Division, Office of The Judge Advocate General, is required.

*4 Added 115-1*

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

OFFICIAL

GEORGE S. BROWN, General, USAF  
Chief of Staff

JACK R. BENSON, Colonel, USAF  
Director of Administration

#### SUMMARY OF REVISED, DELETED, OR ADDED MATERIAL

This revision changes subparas 4a and b to require the summary of facts in lieu of findings, and limits recommendations of investigations to areas other than safety considerations.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
Headquarters Military Airlift Command  
Scott Air Force Base, Illinois 62225

MAC SUPPLEMENT 1  
AFR 110-14  
6 February 1974

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**Judge Advocate General Activities**

**FEB 8 1974**

**COLLATERAL INVESTIGATIONS  
OF AIRCRAFT AND MISSILE ACCIDENTS**

AFR 110-14, 1 November 1973, is supplemented as follows:

1d. Comply with AFM 120-3, chapter 16, concerning advice to witnesses.

2. The collateral investigation appointing authority is determined by AFR 127-4, paragraph 9c, 1 January 1973, and MAC Supplements

thereto. Coordinate appointment of a collateral investigation with MAC/JA.

6. (Added) References. These directives are pertinent to collateral investigations:

AFR 127-4

AFR 11-1

AFM 112-1, chapter 4

AFM 120-3

AFM 127-1, chapter 15



**PAUL K. CARLTON, General, USAF**  
*Commander*

**HIRAM GRIFFIN, Colonel, USAF**  
*Director of Administration*

Supersedes AFR 110-14/MACSUP 1, 9 August 1972.

OPR: JAC

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SWORN STATEMENT

OF

CAPTAIN DENNIS W. TRAYNOR

22 MILITARY AIRLIFT SQUADRON

TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

15 MAY 1975

# STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Travis Air Force Base, California

(Place)

15 MAY 1975

(Date)

I, Captain Dennis W. Traynor, hereby state that  
Colonel Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr.,                      has identified himself to me  
as C5A Collateral Investigation Officer USAF.  
(Special Agent AFOSI, Security Police, Other-Specify)

I do hereby voluntarily and of my own free will make the following statement without having been subjected to any coercion, unlawful influence or unlawful inducement.

I am Dennis W. Traynor, Captain,                     , 22 Military Airlift Squadron, USAF, I was assigned to the 22 Military Airlift Squadron, Travis Air Force Base, California on March 1972. I have approximately 3031 hours total flying time in the USAF and 988 hours total flying time in the C-5 aircraft. My crew qualification as of 4 April 1975 was aircraft commander and my crew position upon departure from Saigon, Vietnam, at approximately 1600 hours, 4 April 1975, was that of aircraft commander.

Our crew brought into Clark Air Base, R. P. aircraft 80218 on 3 April 1975 at 0637Z (1437L). Enroute to Clark, we shutdown #2 engine because it exceeded the vibration parameters on our MADAR. Also due to the high priority of the mission we departed Hickam without fixing the copilot's windshield, taking the part with us to have it fixed at Clark. This was done so as not to incur another day of maintenance delay.

Upon arrival at Clark, I suggested that the cargo be reloaded on another aircraft (as there was one standing by in commission) and offered my loadmasters to do the switching. The plan was summarily rejected. Inside at the Operations Center (O.C.) I was advised that there was another crew eligible for this mission, however, depending upon maintenance, my crew might take the load into Saigon. This, it was explained to me, was only if flying C-5 aircraft into Saigon was approved.

We were alerted at 0300L on the fourth to take 80218 into Saigon with the load we had brought into Clark. After arrival at O.C., we were informed that maintenance had not yet begun to change the co-pilot's window but they had inspected the #2 engine and supposed that MADAR was wrong because they had found no signs of wear.

While we were waiting for maintenance to fix the airplane, I was told to contact 22AF Command Post. Lt Colonel Toneck and Major Spinney advised me that General Carlton had directed the next C-5 available to take orphans out of Saigon. This order apparently was immediately following a televised Presidential statement that the United States would begin the immediate airlift of orphans out of Saigon, naming the C-5 as one of the carriers.

I was advised by 22AF that we were to take out as many orphans and their attendants as were ready to go, floorloading them as necessary. Through Clark Ops Center, they asked how many children I could take if I combat loaded them and I estimated 1,000. Not knowing how many would be ready for evacuation, we began to plan on a possible max load. 22AF told me that they were alerting an AirEvac crew that was on a one hour standby and Clark O. C. was to begin gathering the necessary supplies and medical gear such as blankets, pillows, 500 milks, 500 juices, box lunches, baby bottles, etc. The Chief of the MAC 604th Support Squadron, Colonel Griswold was on hand with his radio to personally coordinate with my crew, all predeparture communications,

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Page 1 of 3 Pages

information, and loading.

Maintenance was completed, all available supplies were loaded and the "Before Starting Engines" check was completed. We were advised by O.C. to hold engine start because they could not get confirmation that Saigon would have orphans ready for us. We were also advised that we would be taking a Lt Colonel Willis with us to assist in any way possible, although his primary responsibility would be to observe and report on this, the first of the President's "Babylift" operation.

Our wait was terminated when O.C. told us the departure had been indefinitely delayed. We were to come back into the terminal to wait. This was accomplished, however, we were met coming in the door and told to make an ASAP departure; that Saigon was expecting us and would have an undetermined number of orphans ready for us.

The departure from Clark, enroute and the arrival at Saigon was routine. We departed Clark at 1013L, arrived Saigon 1251L/4 April.

At Saigon, we taxied to our parking spot on the diagonal taxiway heading north, just in front of the tower. We were met by the QC (Vietnamese Security) and they set up guard posts around the perimeter of the aircraft. My crew members were stationed on the left and right sides and one was on the longcord (interphone) from the crew entry door. During the download and upload, the aircraft was approached only from the rear and left troop door.

The coordinator for the "Babylift" was the Assistant Air Attaché, Lt Colonel Mitchell who said an estimated 300 people would be boarding the aircraft. We were given a manifest for the adults and baggage, and Lt Colonel Mitchell said he would have a list of the orphans for us. We discovered just prior to takeoff that his listing of the orphans was incomplete (as far as I know this list of orphans was never available) and that the baggage had not been quarantined after inspection. Plus there was a possibility that some was added after the inspection. Usually passengers and bags are isolated from other people after inspection and prior to loading an aircraft. All baggage was loaded in rows on the aft ramp and cargo floor.

We loaded as many infants as comfortable in the troop compartment first, followed by the older kids and the attendants who were well strapped in along the side catwalk and seated on blankets and pillows under tiedown straps on the cargo floor.

At the last minute, newsmen arrived on the scene and Lt Colonel Mitchell asked if it would be possible for them to take some pictures. I had one crew member escort for each camera crew, and, one at a time they proceeded up from the left troop door, up through the cargo compartment and out the crew door.

The takeoff and climbout was uneventful until the rapid decompression. The rapid decompression was exactly as demonstrated in an altitude chamber. We were climbing out past Vung Tau just past FL230.

After the crew checked in on oxygen, I asked what happened and began an easy descent, pulling off power and rolling into a left turn. We turned about 180 degrees and were too nose low with the airspeed increasing. I was told that the pressure door and part of the ramp was missing. The troop compartment and the cargo compartment reported that there was no panic and that the passengers and crew were secure.

*WHS*

CONTINUATION SHEET FOR AF FORM 1168, 1168a and/or 1169.

The engineer had immediately reported a loss of #2 hydraulic pressure accompanying the rapid decompression, and the loss of #1 while he was trying to pressurize the other systems. I directed the scanner downstairs to inspect the wheel well area and the hydraulic reservoir area.

As the initial descent steepened, I had to add max power in the dive as I had discovered that I had no control over any control surfaces in the tail. The loadmaster on headset, Sgt Snedegar, confirmed that the control cables as well as the hydraulic lines had been severed to the tail section. My only control surfaces were the right aileron and the left spoiler. Limited roll control and power became my only means of flying the aircraft. Because of our highly unstable means of controlling the aircraft, I elected to make an immediate return to Saigon. I realized that with the loss of the primary gear hydraulic source, emergency gear extension should be begun as soon as practical. This was initiated according to the checklist at 10,000 feet and was completed only seconds before impact.

In the turn to final approximately 7 or 8 miles from the end of the runway, the nose pitched down rapidly, and the addition of maximum throttle would not bring the nose back up. I decided to take the aircraft straight ahead toward an open area expecting to recover from the nose low attitude as we had done before.

We impacted the ground with the gear extended, in a fairly level attitude. The vertical velocity was about 500-600 ft/min. The first impact did not seem severe and we became airborne again. The second impact on the other side of the Saigon River was rougher and after a few seconds, the lights went out. I felt the nose seem to furrow down and soon it was dark. We slowly rolled inverted and suddenly it was stone quiet. I was alive.

I exited through my side window and began to organize my crew in the subsequent rescue effort. Helicopters arrived in minutes and took the survivors and then the bodies to Thailand, to a Vietnamese hospital and to Saigon.

The crew was taken to the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital except for Sgt Snedegar and myself. We went to BGen Baugh's office and called MGen Gonge to give him an account of what had happened. The next day the remaining crew was airevaced to Clark and remained there for the Accident Investigation Board. We departed Clark on 15 April 1975.

31. I further state that I have read this entire statement. Initialed all pages and corrections, and signed this statement, and that it is correct and true as written.

WITNESSES:

(Signature)

(Address)

(Signature)

(Address)

*Dennis W. Traeger*  
(Signature)

22 MAS, Travis AFB CA 94535

(Address)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized by law to administer oaths, this

15<sup>th</sup> day of May 1975

at Travis Air Force Base, California

*Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr.*  
(Signature of Person Administering Oath.)

BERNARD A. WAXSTEIN, JR., Colonel, USAF

CSA Collateral Investigation Officer

(Type Name, Grade & Title of Person Administering Oath.)

SWORN STATEMENT

OF

CAPTAIN TILFORD W. HARP

22 MILITARY AIRLIFT SQUADRON

TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

16 MAY 1975

# STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Travis Air Force Base, California

(Place)

16 MAY 1975

(Date)

I, Captain Tilford W. Harp, hereby state that  
Colonel Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr. has identified himself to me  
 as C5A Collateral Investigation Officer USAF.  
 (Special Agent AFOSI, Security Police, Other-Specify)

I do hereby voluntarily and of my own free will make the following statement without having been subjected to any coercion, unlawful influence or unlawful inducement. I am Tilford W. Harp, Captain, 22 Military Airlift Squadron, USAF. I was assigned to the 22 Military Airlift Squadron, Travis Air Force Base, California, on 1 September 1973. I have approximately 1577 hours total flying time in the USAF and 539 hours total flying time in the C-5 aircraft. My crew qualification as of 4 April 1975 was First Pilot and my crew position upon departure from Saigon, Vietnam at approximately 1600 hours, 4 April 1975, was that of copilot.

We arrived at Clark AB, R.P. at 1437L on 3 April 1975 on aircraft 80218. We were given a 12 hour release against a possible mission into Saigon on aircraft 218. Following dinner at the Officers' Club, we (all the officers) went to bed at 1900L and were awakened at 0300L with an alert on aircraft 80218 going to Saigon with return to Clark. We showed at Operations Center at 0400L with normal flight planning and eating at the Snack Bar by the Operations Center. We were told at this time (0600L) that we would be taking an aeromedical crew into Saigon to bring back some orphans. We were told we would have to wait until the crew of nurses, medical technicians and medical supplies arrived prior to departure. At approximately 0700L we arrived at the aircraft to find that maintenance was still being performed on the copilot's windshield and the No. 2 engine. Maintenance was completed at approximately 0800L, but we were still waiting on extra blankets, food, juices, etc., for the orphans for the return flight. During this time, we asked for additional life rafts, oxygen equipment, and a special security team to go with us to Saigon. We also asked for the Infra Red Kit to place in the troop doors for going into Saigon, a possible high threat area. All items were refused due to not having them available, not enough, etc. Everyone realized the humanitarian importance of the mission from higher headquarters and the mission proceeded. At approximately 0900L, we were called by Ops Center to come inside and wait, that there was a holdup in Saigon, that Saigon was not ready for us. We went inside and were immediately told to turn around and go back outside and make an ASAP departure. We departed Clark at 1013L with an uneventful flight to Saigon at FL310. Captain Traynor was in the left seat, I was in the right seat, Captain Malone was in the jump seat. We landed at Saigon at 1253L. During the flight to Saigon, we discussed the offload and onload at Saigon. Captain Traynor stressed the importance of professionalism and security at Saigon since we knew there would be several camera men present. Also, on the flight to Saigon, part of the crew changed the crew baggage from downstairs into the crew rest facilities.

After arrival at Saigon, we taxied to parking on Taxiway 18, and shutdown engines and proceeded with the offload of the howitzers, Sgt Engels (engineer) and I remained on the flight deck to monitor the Auxiliary Power Units and the radios. Following completion of the offload, we proceeded with the onload. The onload was very disorganized. My description of the onload as being disorganized reflects on the ground assistance at Saigon, not on the aircrew or medical crew. The aircrew and

AF FORM 1169  
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Page 1 of 3 Pages

medical crew did an outstanding job of getting us loaded in our ground time and making an on time departure. To me, the onload seemed disorganized due to a lack of coordination on Saigon's part. The passengers were not ready to load, there were no stairs to load the passengers, the passengers' baggage had not been palletized, etc. Compared to normal MAC operations, coordination was definitely lacking at Saigon, but it can probably be explained by the volatile environment. The Defense Attache Office was not able to supply us with accurate manifests, but told us there was an accurate master copy of the passenger manifest on file. The only manifests that I saw were given to Captain Melton (who gave them to Sgt Snedegar), and Captain Melton gave me the impression that not everyone had been manifested. I believe the DAO representative had mentioned this to him. Someone downstairs during the onload mentioned that it was no problem because the orphanage (or some agency) had accurate manifests. At one time or another, everyone helped with the onload of babies, women and children. Another aeromedical crew had joined us at Saigon, and the med crews and flight crew did an outstanding job of getting everyone seated and strapped in. I might mention that during completion of the onload I was on interphone, and observed a normal closing of the aft doors through interphone communications. By observed, I meant what I heard over interphone. The load master had indicated all lights were out on his panel, the doors were closed, and then requested that I go to SAFE with the aft door switch, which I did. We still had the door open light on the annunciator panel, but this was due to the Crew Entry Door still being open. All indications over interphone sounded normal.

*Telford W. Hoag*

We made a maximum power rolling takeoff at 1603L with no problems. All procedures were accomplished in an orderly and professional manner. We climbed at 200KIAS until approximately 16,000 feet and began a slow acceleration to 270 Kts indicated airspeed. We discussed the possibility of going at FL370 due to bad weather off the coast of Saigon, but due to oxygen requirements in case of a rapid decompression, we decided to proceed to Clark at FL330. We proceeded on course to Vung Tau radio beacon. Approximately 3 minutes past Vung Tau, passing FL230, and around 260 Kts, a loud bang was heard followed by fog in the cockpit. I immediately donned my oxygen mask and checked in on interphone, followed on interphone by the troop compartment. Whenever the requirement to don oxygen equipment is apparent, each crew position is required to check in on interphone that his respective crew position is on oxygen. For example: "copilot is on oxygen." I checked in on oxygen, and the troop compartment (TSgt Doughty) checked in saying they were on oxygen and everyone was okay. A few seconds later, the troop compartment told us about the injury to SMSgt Perkins. I turned on the No Smoking, Fasten Seat Belts switches as we began a slow descending left turn back to Saigon. I attempted to tell Saigon Control of our problem, but my microphone was cutting in and out. Captain Langford, the Navigator, took control of the radios and got out a transmission to Saigon, and then Captain Malone, in the jump seat, took the radio and made all the radio calls from that point on. The Engineer had notified us we had lost hydraulic systems 1 and 2 and I was noticing the lights on the overhead panel when the pilot remarked that he was unable to bring the nose of the aircraft up. I looked at the pilot, and he had the control wheel to his chest (as was mine), and we were still rapidly descending. I forcefully shook my control wheel with no response, and tried the trim switches on the yoke and the manual hydraulic pitch trim lever, all with no results. At this time, we pushed up the throttles and the airplane began a climb with airspeed rapidly decreasing. We rolled to the right and pulled back the throttles and started to descend. At this time, we realized the only way to control the aircraft was with power. I yelled at the engineer to get us a hydraulic system for the flight controls. He said that we

had 3 and 4 systems. This rung a bell in my mind, and I then selected Right Inboard Elevator System No. 3 at about 20,000 feet but with no results. We were getting vectors back to Saigon from our Navigator. During the descent, we discussed what we had and what we didn't have. At approximately 10,000 feet we began putting the gear down. The forward main gears came down normally, and I emergency extended the nose gear and the aft main gear. At about 8 miles from the field, we began a shallow left turn to Runway 25L at approximately 4000 feet and 230 knots airspeed. The pilot was flying power, and I was flying ailerons since it took both of us to handle it. As we started our turn, the nose began dropping very low and we applied power with a descent that began to rapidly accelerate. I saw a wide open field with some water in front of us, and I rolled wings level just as the pilot stated something to the effect of land straight ahead. We had full throttles applied trying to break our rate of descent, and I can remember seeing nothing but ground rapidly approaching in the windshield. All I could think to do was hold the wings level and hope for the best. Just prior to impact, the pilot retarded the throttles to idle and I hit the flap handle down hoping to pitch up the nose. We impacted the ground relatively smooth and went skidding through the swamp and bog. Suddenly we were airborne again and passed over the Saigon River. We impacted a second time extremely hard and the airplane began to break up and the lights went out and the windshields were blacked out with mud. We began to roll to the right and soon came to a stop. I popped my lap belt open and exited out the pilot's side window. The helicopters arrived in a matter of minutes and we began to assist with the rescue of the injured. I was taken to a first aid station for injuries to my legs, then bussed to the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital in Saigon for x-rays. We were then taken to the Gray House in Saigon for billeting, and we departed for Clark the next day on a C-141, arriving at 1845L.

JWH

31. I further state that I have read this entire statement. Initialed all pages and corrections, and signed this statement, and that it is correct and true as written.

WITNESSES:

(Signature)

(Address)

(Signature)

(Address)

Jillford W. Harp

(Signature)

22 MAS, Travis AFB CA

(Address)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized by law to administer oaths, this

16<sup>th</sup> day of May 1975

at Travis Air Force Base, California

*Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr.*  
(Signature of Person Administering Oath.)

BERNARD A. WAXSTEIN, JR., Colonel, USAF

C5A Collateral Investigation Officer

(Type Name, Grade & Title of Person Administering Oath.)



SWORN STATEMENT

OF

CAPTAIN KEITH D. MALONE

22 MILITARY AIRLIFT SQUADRON

TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

15 MAY 1975

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Travis Air Force Base, California

(Place)

15 MAY 1975

(Date)

I, Captain Keith D. Malone, hereby state that  
Colonel Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr., [redacted] has identified himself to me  
as C5A Collateral Investigation Officer USAF.  
(Special Agent AFOSI, Security Police, Other-Specify)

I do hereby voluntarily and of my own free will make the following statement without having been subjected to any coercion, unlawful influence or unlawful inducement. I am Keith D. Malone, Captain, [redacted], 22 Military Airlift Squadron, USAF, I was assigned to the 22 Military Airlift Squadron, Travis Air Force Base, California, on 17 August 1974. I have approximately 1793 hours total flying time in the USAF and 80 hours total flying time in the C-5 aircraft. My crew qualification as of 4 April 1975 was copilot, non-qualified my position in the cockpit upon departure from Saigon, Vietnam, at approximately 1600 hours, 4 April 1975, was in the Instructor Pilot Seat (Jump Seat).

We arrived at Clark AB, R. P. at 1435L on 3 April 1975. We processed through ACP, checked into billeting, ate at the Officers' Club and retired for crew rest at 1900. At 0300, 4 April we were alerted to aircraft 80218 going to Saigon. We reported to ACP to file the flight plan at 0400, received pre-mission briefing and ate breakfast. At 0600 we were notified that we would be delivering cargo to Saigon and bringing orphans back to Clark from Saigon. At 0700 we proceeded to the aircraft and were notified that aircraft was not maintenance ready. It still required an engine run on No. 2 engine and the change of the copilot's window was not yet completed. At 0800 the maintenance was completed and medical technicians for the orphans had arrived. We were still waiting for blankets, milk, fruit juices, etc. At 0830 we were notified that a Lt Colonel Willis would be going to Saigon with us. At 0900 we were told Saigon was not ready for us and we were to come into Ops and wait for a 1100 departure. We proceeded to Ops and once inside Lt Colonel Willis met us and said everything was arranged and we were to take off ASAP. We proceeded back to the aircraft, [redacted] all checklists and departed Clark at 1013L. The flight from Clark to Saigon was from 1013L to 1253L. Enroute, Captain Traynor directed that all crew baggage be brought upstairs and further directed SMSgt Perkins to formulate his plan for the offload of cargo and the upload of orphans. SMSgt Perkins also assigned various crew members to maintain constant vigilance around specific areas of the aircraft during the offload and onload.

We landed at Saigon and were parked on a taxiway<sup>18</sup>. There was some delay prior to shutting down engines because ground parked us on Taxiway 18 and told us to shut down engines while a marshall wanted us to come forward on the taxiway. We shut down as ground control directed. We proceeded with the offload of the howitzers and upon completion we started to onload the orphans. The offload of the howitzers was quite orderly. The offload crew was working rapidly. There were a few foreign reporters standing to one side observing the offload. There is nothing out of the ordinary I can comment on about the offload. The onload was not so well organized. We did not know how many orphans we would be getting. The busses with the children pulled up and the women carrying babies brought them up to the left troop door where they would hand the babies to personnel inside the aircraft who in turn would hand them to us on the ladder and we would pass the babies upstairs. After we were full upstairs the rest were loaded downstairs. Because I was not a primary crew member and had no other

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specific duties I assisted with the orphans. I helped with carrying the babies upstairs and then in loading the passengers' baggage. All baggage was placed in rows forward of the ramp and on the ramp. Once everyone was aboard I proceeded to the troop compartment and assisted in quieting the babies. Approximately 20 minutes prior to takeoff, I proceeded to the flight deck and took my position in the IP seat. I was in the IP seat to assist with any additional radio calls. We started engines and took off at 1603L.

We had a normal takeoff on Runway 07 and after takeoff we turned right and proceeded direct to Vung Tau. At approximately FL 160, the aircraft commander decided to increase airspeed from 200 KCAS to 270 KCAS. At FL 200 I proceeded back to the latrine area. As I started to enter the relief crew compartment we experienced the rapid decompression. I knew immediately what it was and knew I needed oxygen and I ran back to the IP seat and put on my quick don oxygen mask. At that time we were in a left descending turn back to Tan Son Nhut. While in the descent the copilot was having trouble transmitting so the navigator was given the radios. Since I had better access to the radios I informed the navigator I would assume control of the radios. Also, during the descent the aircraft commander realized that he had no elevator control and consequently could not control our descent. Power was added to make the nose come up and the descent was somewhat controlled using power for pitch control and ailerons for bank. At approximately FL 100 the gear was lowered. Since we had lost hydraulic systems 1 and 2 only the forward mains would extend normally. The nose and aft gear were emergency extended. During this time I had been talking to Saigon approach on guard and had informed them of our situation and our intentions. I told them we would be crash landing on Runway 25L because we could not control our descent. At approximately 8 miles out and at 4000 feet we started our turn to final. At this time I realized I was not strapped in so I then put my shoulder harness and seat belt on. When I looked back we were in a nose low attitude and the airspeed was building. The pilots added power and the nose appeared to rise, they then rolled out the bank and the decision was made to land straight ahead. We impacted the ground, bounced and impacted once again. I unstrapped and followed the aircraft commander out the aircraft commander's side window. The engineer followed me and then the copilot. The helicopters, both ARVN and Air America, began to arrive within minutes after impact and started taking survivors back to hospitals. All crew members assisted with the evacuation of the survivors. After all surviving passengers were evacuated we were taken aboard a helicopter to Air America and then to the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital. We were checked and treated and then taken to the Gray House for billeting. The next day we boarded a C-141 at 1615 and were flown to Clark. We arrived at 1845 and we were checked into C-Ward of the Base Hospital.

31. I further state that I have read this entire statement. Initialed all pages and corrections, and signed this statement, and that it is correct and true as written.

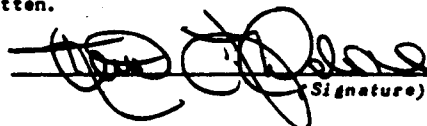
WITNESSES:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address)

  
(Signature)

22 Military Airlift Squadron, Travis AFB CA  
(Address)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized by law to administer oaths, this

15<sup>th</sup> day of May 1975

at Travis AFB, California

  
(Signature of Person Administering Oath.)

BERNARD A. WAXSTEIN, JR., Colonel, USAF  
C5A Collateral Investigation Officer

(Type Name, Grade & Title of Person Administering Oath.)

SWORN STATEMENT

OF

CAPTAIN JOHN T. LANGFORD

22 MILITARY AIRLIFT SQUADRON

IRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

16 MAY 1975

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Travis Air Force Base, California

(Place)

16 May 1975

(Date)

I, Capt John T. Langford, hereby state that  
Colonel Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr., has identified himself to me  
as C-5A Collateral Investigation Officer USAF.  
(Special Agent AFOSI, Security Police, Other-Specify)

I do hereby voluntarily and of my own free will make the following statement without having been subjected to any coercion, unlawful influence or unlawful inducement.

I am John T. Langford, Captain, 22 Military Airlift Squadron (MAC), Travis Air Force Base, California, USAF, I was assigned to the 22 Military Airlift Squadron, Travis Air Force Base, California, on 22 September 1972. I have approximately 1797 hours total flying time in the USAF and 965 hours total flying time in the C-5 aircraft. My crew qualification as of 4 April 1975 was navigator and my crew position upon departure from Saigon, Vietnam, at approximately 1600 hours, 4 April 1975, was that of navigator.

*John T. Langford*  
The crew arrived at Clark on C5A 68218 1437 3 April 1975. I personally made plans to eat at the Officers' Club and go to bed early for a 0300 legal time on 4 April 1975. By 1900, 3 April 1975, I was sleeping in quarters. At 0300/4 April the crew was alerted and we showed at 0400. We departed Clark 1013/4 arriving Saigon 1253, Tan Son Nhut AB. The crew was prepared to offload the inbound load and upload the passengers for the return to Clark AB, P.I. Everyone on the crew had a specific role in the orderly upload of passengers. This included the medical personnel as well as flight crew. The coordination required to upload was extensive, but approximately 3 hours later it was accomplished. Prior to engine start the navigator's station was through flighted in preparation for the return leg to Clark AB. Last minute details were completed on the flight deck with copilot and pilot. At 1545 engine start checklist was commenced with the crew in place. Taxi of the airplane began at 1555. Takeoff time was recorded as 1603. After airborne contact with the ground was made, clearance was received to progress to the next checkpoint, Vung Tau. The climbout was smooth and intended course was intercepted. I focused my attention on monitoring the departure, supplying enroute times to checkpoints and assisting the pilots with weather on radar and crosstrack information.

The first checkpoint estimate, 0813 was determined for Vung Tau. Vung Tau was checked over interphone at 0813 in coordination with the pilot. Outbound magnetic course having previously been confirmed interphone was being used in the intended professional manner. I was looking for weather on radar. After completing the departure message for the route the last comment I made on interphone prior to the rapid decompression was regarding thin layered cirrus either side of our present heading 30-40 NM away, which was no factor. The rapid decompression occurred according to my estimate 0815-0817 above 20.0 thousand feet. I checked in on interphone as did the rest of the crew after donning oxygen masks. The pilot began a descending left turn back to Tan Son Nhut AB and coordination on systems failures began among the engineer and pilots. Pitch control was immediately assessed by the pilots as affecting airplane attitude. The plan of action for landing rapidly took shape during the descent, the priority being to get the airplane on the ground. The gear was lowered, a turn to final approach was attempted when pitch attitude and rate

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of descent posed a serious problem to control of the aircraft for landing configuration. The last 4500 feet of altitude was lost rapidly as the pilots attempted to bring the nose of the airplane up and level. Pilot called "crew, crash landing," when restoring aircraft heading to one at which aircraft control could be maintained. Initial impact was firm and the aircraft went airborne again across a river and impacted a second time with a definite third motion in coming to a stop. First aid and rescue began immediately with crew members assisting in the evacuation by helicopter back to Tan Son Nhut AB. The crew was sent to Seventh Day Adventist Hospital in Saigon for medical evaluations. Later that evening we were billeted at the Gray House. The next day we departed Tan Son Nhut at 1615 (5 April 1975) and arrived Clark AB, P.I. 1845.

31. I further state that I have read this entire statement. Initialed all pages and corrections, and signed this statement, and that it is correct and true as written.

## WITNESSES:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address)

John T. Langford  
(Signature) John T. Langford

22 MAS, Travis AFB CA 94535

(Address)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized by law to administer oaths, this

16th day of May 1975

at Travis Air Force Base, California

Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr.  
(Signature of Person Administering Oath.)  
BERNARD A. WAXSTEIN, JR., Colonel, USAF  
C5A Collateral Investigation Officer

(Type Name, Grade & Title of Person Administering Oath.)

SWORN STATEMENT

OF

MAJOR WILLIAM G. WALLACE

22 AIR FORCE

TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

16 MAY 1975



STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Travis Air Force Base, California

(Place)

16 MAY 1975

(Date)

I, Major William G. Wallace, hereby state that  
Colonel Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr., [redacted] has identified himself to me  
as C5A Collateral Investigation Officer USAF.

(Special Agent AFOSI, Security Police, Other-Specify)

I do hereby voluntarily and of my own free will make the following statement without having been subjected to any coercion, unlawful influence or unlawful inducement. I am William Guy Wallace, Major, [redacted], 22 Air Force, attached to 22 Military Airlift Squadron, USAF. I was assigned to the 22 Military Airlift Squadron, Travis Air Force Base, California, on 1 December 1972. I have approximately 6132 hours total flying time in the USAF and 908 hours total flying time in the C-5 aircraft. My crew qualification as of 4 April 1975 was Senior Navigator, Qualified and my crew position upon departure from Saigon, Vietnam, at approximately 1600 hours, 4 April 1975, was that of Navigator augmentee.

We departed Clark AB, P.I. on 4 April 1975. Destination was Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN. We received all required briefings at Clark AB. I was the navigator for this portion of the mission. Departure was delayed 4.1 hours due to minor maintenance and notification that we were to airlift orphans and their sponsors from Tan Son Nhut to Clark AB. We had to await the medical crew going with us. The flight to Tan Son Nhut was routine with no problems encountered.

After arrival at Tan Son Nhut we offloaded our cargo and onloaded the orphans and sponsors. SAsgt Perkins was at the left troop door directing the flow of personnel in the aircraft and up the ladder to the troop compartment. The flow was orderly with little to no milling about by the passengers. Other crew members were assisting in lifting babies up the ladder. I assisted in lifting the orphans (babies up the ladder to the troop compartment.) Primarily I took the babies who were crying and soothed them prior to their placement in the troop compartment. I then assisted the older children of walking age and their sponsors. I helped direct them to their seating places on the "catwalks" on both sides of the cargo compartment and also aided in placing adults and remaining babies on blankets and pillows on the cargo compartment deck.

After all were strapped in, I asked for and received permission from Captain Traynor, aircraft commander, to remain in the cargo compartment for the departure in case any of the children became upset. Departure was normal; all persons were calm. When I felt assured there was nothing I could do I returned to the relief crew compartment of the flight deck. Shortly after I got there, there was a rapid decompression. There was a loud noise, followed immediately by fog in the relief crew compartment. It was exactly the same as in altitude chamber training. I immediately used the emergency oxygen system. At approximately 8000 feet altitude I returned to the cargo compartment to assist the flight crew and medical technician crew members. The adult sponsors, children and babies appeared to be calm. There was no panic. People were where they were for the original departure. Flight crew members and medical technicians were assisting the passengers with oxygen walk around bottles. I went to the rear of the aircraft and surveyed the area of damage. The pressure door, ramp, center door, and petal or side doors all appeared to be missing. There were a number (unknown) of cables

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MAJ WALLACE:

and hydraulic lines dangling out the rear of the aircraft. Except for an injured medical technician, who was being aided by a flight nurse, all passengers appeared to be in good shape. I returned to the flight deck. As I got abeam the relief crew compartment seats, MSgt McAtee shouted, "prepare for crash landing!" I ran to the cargo compartment and told TSgt Bradley to inform as many as possible to prepare for crash landing. This was accomplished. I went back to the relief crew compartment and strapped in. We impacted seconds later. First impact was relatively smooth. I felt and heard the gear touch down and then rip away. We then were airborne again. The second impact was more severe, but relatively smooth. I was aware only of a loud noise as the aircraft broke up. Lighting went at the time of the second impact. Visibility was very dim. Just before coming to the final rest the flight deck rolled over. When the flight deck came to rest I exited. I did not see the pilots or navigator. I thought they were dead. There was a woman and a baby pinned to the underside of the flight deck which was nearly upside down. I checked them; both were dead. I heard a baby cry. The sound was coming from the troop compartment which was approximately 100 yards away. I ran to the troop compartment. Lt Aune (Flight Nurse) and Sgt Hadley (Medical Technician) were there. I directed Sgt Hadley to open number 3 left door. I entered the troop compartment and went to the forward bulkhead which had a large hole in it. Sgt Parker, seriously injured and a woman, seriously injured, were there. Both were unconscious. I then had the flight nurses and crew members form a line to lift the passengers (babies) out. About this time, Air America and VNAF helicopters arrived. We formed a line and passed the babies to the hovering helicopters. After most of the babies were out, helicopters with stretchers arrived. I got a stretcher from a helicopter and directed it to land near the front of the troop compartment. I removed Sgt Parker and placed him on the stretcher and <sup>dragged</sup> ~~strapped~~ it to the helicopter. I then returned to number 3 left door and continued to evacuate personnel. Lt Aune came to me and asked to be relieved of duty. She stated she couldn't walk, sit or stand. I helped lift and carry her to a helicopter. I then was directed by an Air America pilot to evacuate all crew members. He stated that they had enough personnel and airlift to evacuate any remaining people. I went to the flight deck area. Captain Traynor was there. This was the first I'd seen him. I briefed him. We then boarded a helicopter; took off; landed at the troop compartment and picked up another crew member. We were then airlifted to the Air America Ramp. Later we were transported to the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital. That evening we were taken to the Gray House for quarters. We departed Tan Son Nhut AB the next day via C-141 to Clark AB.

William Wallace

31. I further state that I have read this entire statement. Initialed all pages and corrections, and signed this statement, and that it is correct and true as written.

WITNESSES:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address)

William Wallace  
(Signature)

22 AF, Travis AFB CA  
(Address)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized by law to administer oaths, this

16<sup>th</sup> May of May 1975

at Travis Air Force Base, California

Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr.  
(Signature of Person Administering Oath.)

BERNARD A. WAXSTEIN, JR., Colonel, USAF  
C5A Collateral Investigation Officer

(Type Name, Grade & Title of Person Administering Oath.)

SWORN STATEMENT

OF

SMSGT HOWARD C. PERKINS

22 MILITARY AIRLIFT SQUADRON

IRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

28 MAY 1975

# STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Travis Air Force Base, California

(Place)

28 MAY 1975

(Date)

I, SMSgt Howard C. Perkins,, hereby state that  
Colonel Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr., has identified himself to me  
 as C-5 Collateral Investigating Officer USAF.

(Special Agent AFOSI, Security Police, Other-Specify)

I do hereby voluntarily and of my own free will make the following statement without having been subjected to any coercion, unlawful influence or unlawful inducement. I am Howard C. Perkins, Senior Master Sergeant, 22 Military Airlift Squadron, USAF. I was assigned to the 22 Military Airlift Squadron, Travis Air Force Base, California on 1 August 1974. I have approximately 3994 hours total flying time in the USAF and 322 hours total flying time in the C-5 aircraft. My crew qualification as of 4 April 1975 was First Loadmaster and my crew position upon departure from Saigon, Vietnam, at approximately 1600 hours, 4 April 1975, was that of Primary Loadmaster.

We arrived at Clark AB 3 April 1975 at 1251. I was alerted at 0300 hours local on 4 April 1975. As the NCOIC of the enlisted crew members, I alerted the other enlisted crew members. Crew transportation picked us up, and we reported to Base Operations. I was advised by Captain Traynor that he would like one of the enlisted crew members to make the INTEL briefing. I selected myself and asked SMSgt Snedegar from 60 MAW to attend. We reported to Aircraft 80218 and loaded our personal bags. The remaining enlisted crew members started their preflight duties. The officers, Sgt Snedegar and I returned to Operations for the INTEL briefing and flight plan filing. After returning to the aircraft, each loadmaster reported to me that his area of responsibility had been inspected and he was ready for takeoff. We had three delays prior to takeoff (one maintenance had not completed replacing the right windshield - two, it was required that the engines be run at max power because we had one engine shut down on arrival at Clark AB - three, we were delayed by Operations because Tan Son Nhut AB would not be ready to receive us if we arrived too soon.) After takeoff, I assigned three crew members to act as outside guards when we landed at Tan Son Nhut. MSgt McAtee was assigned to the nose wheel area. TSgt Bradley was assigned to the right wheel well area. TSgt Parker was assigned to the left wheel well area. After landing these crew members assumed their assigned positions. The remainder of the loadmasters namely myself, Sgt Snedegar, Sgt Payne, Sgt Aguillon and Sgt Doughty stationed ourselves throughout the cargo compartment and cargo ramp during the off loading. I ordered some steps for personnel loading and after the steps were placed in position for loading I placed myself in front of the left troop door to control entry. Other crew members were placed on the troop compartment ladder so the babies could be passed up to medical personnel for seating. After the troop compartment was loaded we started loading babies and older personnel in the cargo compartment aft of the crew entry door on blankets. All of the personnel were loaded forward of the main landing gear. The loadmasters were assigned to specific stations for the return flight. TSgt Bradley was assigned to the forward cargo compartment, TSgt Aguillon was assigned the aft cargo compartment, TSgt Doughty was assigned the forward troop compartment, and TSgt Parker was assigned to the aft troop compartment. Each of these crew members was required to maintain interphone contact with the flight deck. All baggage was loaded in the para-troop door and ramp area. MSgt Payne was administering an evaluation to TSgt Aguillon who closed the rear doors. After the baggage was loaded and doors were closed, I

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INJURED  
IN R.D. - LEE A SHOULDER

Howard C. Perkins

checked the loadmasters aft control panel to see that all lights were out, which indicates that all doors are locked. This is one of my required duties prior to takeoff. The "Before-takeoff" check list requires each compartment to check in that their area is ready for takeoff and the personnel in each area complied with this requirement. During climbout, SMSgt Snedegar came up to the relief crew area to get some passenger comfort items. After obtaining these items he and I returned to the cargo compartment. I talked briefly with TSgt Bradley and TSgt Aguillon to see if everything was going as planned. I then proceeded up the troop compartment ladder. I was standing approximately on the third step from the top, I had started to unlock the personnel retaining gate with my left hand, when the rapid decompression occurred. I locked my right arm over the gate and hung on. During the rapid decompression I was unable to see anything below me. Sgt Doughty and Sgt Parker got their oxygen bottles and put on their oxygen masks and established radio contact with the flight deck. After completing these duties I was given some oxygen after I cut my flight suit left leg, which would not allow me to climb up in the troop compartment. I was assisted by TSgt Parker and TSgt Doughty up into the troop compartment. I took the headset and reported to the flight deck that the cargo ramp, pressure door had been blown from the aircraft. I was not able to move around because my right knee would not stay in place and my right shoulder was dislocated. All the babies were checked by Sgt Parker, Sgt Doughty and the medical crew for proper security in their seats. I was leaning on the screen that surrounds the stairwell and holding to the post for support. TSgt Parker was in the corner holding to the screen surrounding the stairwell and holding to one of the troop seats. On our first touchdown, the escape slide number 4 right started to inflate. TSgt Parker hollered this out to me and started over the top of the troop seats to try and deflate the slide. I slid down on the floor and started after the slide. After the second touchdown, an explosion occurred between the troop compartment and relief crew area, separating the troop compartment from the flight deck area. After the explosion water, grass and mud started entering the forward part of the troop compartment. When the troop compartment came to a complete stop I had slid down to escape hatch number 3 right. I started to inquire if any one was hurt. TSgt Doughty and the medical crew started to remove the number three right and left escape hatches. I went to the forward front of the troop compartment and found TSgt Parker and another lady whom I could not identify. I called for help. Major Wallace and a flight nurse removed him and placed him aboard a helicopter. The lady was removed also. I went back up to escape hatch 3 right, to help remove the babies. I found that my leg and shoulder would not allow me to stand or move the shoulder. I found a child's crutches and cut some seat belts and oxygen hoses and put a splint on my leg. The other able medical and crew members with the civilians would bring the babies to me and I would pass them out the right hatch with my left hand to a flight nurse. After everyone was evacuated they brought in a stoker litter and evacuated me to a small Vietnamese Hospital - then they transported me to the Saigon Adventist Hospital. After about three hours I was evacuated to Clark AB.

Nothing follows.

31. I further state that I have read this entire statement. Initialed all pages and corrections, and signed this statement, and that it is correct and true as written.

WITNESSES:

Howard C Perkins  
(Signature)

22 Military Airlift Squadron, Travis AFB CA  
(Address)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized by law to administer oaths, this

28<sup>th</sup> day of May 19 75

at Travis Air Force Base, California

Bernard A Waxstein  
(Signature of Person Administering Oath.)

BERNARD A. WAXSTEIN, JR., Colonel, USAF

C-5 Collateral Investigating Officer

(Type Name, Grade & Title of Person Administering Oath.)

SWORN STATEMENT

OF

SMSGT RAYMOND F. SNEDEGAR, JR.

22 MILITARY AIRLIFT SQUADRON

IRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

16 MAY 1975



STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Travis Air Force Base, California

(Place)

16 MAY 1975

(Date)

I, Raymond F. Snedegar, Jr., SMSgt, USAF, hereby state that  
Colonel Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr., has identified himself to me  
as C5A Collateral Investigation Officer USAF.  
(Special Agent AFOSI, Security Police, Other-Specify)

I do hereby voluntarily and of my own free will make the following statement without having been subjected to any coercion, unlawful influence or unlawful inducement. I am Raymond F. Snedegar, Jr., SMSgt, assigned 60 Military Airlift Wing/ attached 22 Military Airlift Squadron, USAF. I was assigned to the 22 Military Airlift Squadron, Travis Air Force Base, California, on 8 February 1972. I have approximately 4701 hours total flying time in the USAF and 1311 hours total flying time in the C-5 aircraft. My crew qualification as of 4 April 1975 was Flight Examiner Loadmaster and my crew position upon departure from Saigon, Vietnam, at approximately 1600 hours, 4 April 1975, was that of Flight Examiner Loadmaster.

Raymond F. Snedegar  
I got approximately six hours of sleep inflight enroute to Clark Air Base, Republic of Philippines from Hickam AFB, Hawaii. I arrived at Clark Air Base, R.P. at 0945, 2 April. I got approximately 8 hours sleep the night of 2 April at Clark Air Base. I rested off and on during the day of 3 April and went to bed at 1800 hours. I awoke at approximately 2400 hours and could sleep no more. I was alerted at 0300 hours, 4 April. We departed Clark at 1013 hours for a flight to Saigon and return to Clark. Sgt Parker and I rode in the troop compartment enroute to Saigon with the medical crew. Upon arrival at Saigon, I was outside scanner for rear door opening with TSgt Aguillon opening the doors with MSgt Payne monitoring him since he was administering an evaluation. Offload of 105 mm howitzers were normal and onload of passengers was accomplished. Passengers were onloaded through the left troop door and a chain was formed up the troop compartment ladder by crew members. The babies were passed up the chain to the troop compartment and placed into seats by the medical crew members. The passengers in the cargo compartment either walked or were carried into the cargo compartment through the left troop door and placed on a double layer of blankets in the floor. Tie down straps were placed over their bodies to hold them in position. The baggage was loaded by being brought up a conveyor belt assembly placed to the aft ramp near the center. Baggage was placed on the floor from approximately fuselage station 1700 aft to the aft edge of the aft ramp. There are no combat loading procedures written for the C-5 and this was pointed out by the crew prior to departing Clark AB on the morning of 4 April 1975. The C-141 combat loading procedures outlined in MACR 55-1 were reviewed by me prior to loading the passengers. I personally made a head count of passengers and know for a fact there were exactly 145 orphans in the troop compartment and I counted approximately 138 passengers in the cargo compartment. I was given a manifest prior to departure by Captain Melton. I thought it was the entire manifest but discovered after the accident that it contained only the names of the escorting attendants.

We departed Saigon at 1603 hours, 4 April for the flight back to Clark. During climb-out, SMSgt Perkins and I discussed the amount of water we had available for the passengers with TSgt Johnson (medical technician). Perkins went to the troop compartment to check on that water and I proceeded to the flight deck to check on that water. I checked the water and decided to get a drink before returning to the cargo compartment. I got a cup of water and sat down in the center seat in front of the coat closet in the

relief crew compartment. At this time a rapid decompression occurred with a bang, the masks dropped down, fog filled the cabin and a warning horn sounded. I grabbed a portable walk around bottle and oxygen mask and proceeded to the cargo compartment to assess the damage. I crawled toward the rear of the airplane and checked it. The damage noted was the pressure door, center door and part of the ramp was gone. Both side doors were just barely hanging on, the control cables were all cut and dangling out the back and lots of hydraulic fluid was pumping out the back. The lower aft portion of the unpressurized "hayloft" was gone. Debris was blowing all around. I administered oxygen and comfort to several people on the way forward to go report to the pilot. At the time, I wasn't sure but now I realize oxygen was not a factor and no one would have needed it administered to them. However, several crew members were administering oxygen to some passengers. After reporting the damage to the aircraft commander, I returned to the cargo compartment to assist in aiding and comforting the passengers. I worked with Lt Colonel Willis, TSgt Bradley, MSgt Payne, TSgt Aguilon, Captain Melton and three members of the medical crew. I had been told we were going to crash land but I thought it would be on the runway at Saigon because the pilots had fairly good control of the airplane, or so it seemed. I had just returned to the flight deck when the scanner, MSgt McAtee, said we were about to crash land. I attempted to return to the cargo compartment but MSgt McAtee refused to let me down the ladder and threw me into a seat in the relief crew compartment. We hit the ground almost immediately after I put my seat belt on. After the crash, I stumbled out through the galley area of the flight deck. The initial impact was a solid landing and then I had the sensation of rolling down a runway. I then noticed we were arching up over water. The second impact was extremely rough and then we started rolling over and felt as if the airplane to me was fishtailing to its right. The flight deck was upside down with a burning area off to my extreme left as I stumbled out. The troop compartment was about 40-50 yards away. I remember noticing it to my left after I got out but did not notice where it was in relation to the flight deck as I came out. I pulled Sgt Wise (medical technician) and two babies out of the control cables. I then proceeded to the troop compartment area and assisted TSgt Doughty, SMSgt Perkins and some of the medical crew evacuate the troop compartment. I put a young lady's ear back on and had her hold it in place until she reached the hospital. After rescue arrived, I helped put people on the helicopters and lastly got back into the troop compartment and assisted in passing out the rest of the babies. Major Wallace and I put TSgt Parker on a stretcher and lifted him out of the compartment. I then returned to the flight deck area, met some more of the crew and we made one last search of that area for survivors. We then got on a helicopter and went to Saigon airport. We were met by Brigadier General Baugh who took us to a phone where Captain Traynor and I briefed Major General Gonge and General Carlton on the accident and the status of the crew and what passengers we knew about. He and I were taken to Seventh Day Adventist Hospital about 3 to 4 hours after the accident for treatment. After cleaning of my wounds and bandaging, we were taken to Gray House in Saigon for the night. We were air evacuated to Clark Air Base Hospital approximately 24 hours after the crash. Two days were spent in the hospital and then we were released for questioning by the accident investigation board. We were returned to Travis AFB by C-141 on 15 April 1975.

Raymond F. Swatager

31. I further state that I have read this entire statement. Initialed all pages and corrections, and signed this statement, and that it is correct and true as written.

WITNESSES:

(Signature)

(Address)

(Signature)

(Address)

*Raymond F. Duelegan Jr.*

(Signature)

22 Military Airlift Squadron  
Travis AFB, California

(Address)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized by law to administer oaths, this

16<sup>th</sup> day of May 19 75

at Travis Air Force Base, California

*Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr.*

(Signature of Person Administering Oath.)

BERNARD A. WAXSTEIN, JR., Colonel, USAF  
CSA Collateral Investigation Officer

(Type Name, Grade & Title of Person Administering Oath.)

SWORN STATEMENT

OF

MSGT LYNN F. MCATEE

22 MILITARY AIRLIFT SQUADRON

TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

19 MAY 1975

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Travis Air Force Base, California

19 May 1975 <sup>(Place)</sup>

(Date)

I, Lynn F. McAtee, MSgt,  
Colonel Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr., FR, hereby state that  
as C5A Collateral Investigating Officer, has identified himself to me  
 (Special Agent AFOSI, Security Police, Other-Specify) USAF.

I do hereby voluntarily and of my own free will make the following statement without having been subjected to any coercion, unlawful influence or unlawful inducement.

I am Lynn F. McAtee, Master Sergeant, [redacted], 22 Military Airlift Squadron, USAF. I was assigned to the 22 Military Airlift Squadron, Travis Air Force Base, California, on 15 July 1974. I have approximately 4709 hours total flying time in the USAF and 133 hours total flying time in the C-5 aircraft. My crew qualification as of 4 April 1975 was First Flight Engineer and my crew position upon departure from Saigon, Vietnam, at approximately 1600 hours, 4 April 1975, was that of Scanner.

We landed at Clark AB on the afternoon of 3 April 1975. After post flight duties we checked into trailers, then went to the NCO Club for dinner, then back to trailer for crew rest.

We were alerted approximately 0300 on morning of 4 April, after a little more than 7 hours sleep. The preflight was completed with some difficulty as we were working around necessary maintenance on copilot's windshield. I was scanner. The takeoff was delayed by command post, but we took off not long after our scheduled departure time.

The flight to Saigon was routine and uneventful as were the approach and landing.

Offloading was well coordinated, with a perimeter set up with crew members, myself as scanner again. With assistance from other crew members, I completed a thru flight inspection.

Onloading: The passengers were brought in busses, and waited while the last of the inbound cargo was unloaded. The infants were loaded first, up to the troop compartment. Then the crippled children were loaded. All the older well children and the adult attendants were the last to board.

The whole time the boarding was going on, the loadmasters, and all other crew members that were not on duty were everywhere helping and comforting the young and calming the nervous people.

The only real problem we had was after the boarding was completed. The press arrived at the airplane just about the time we were ready to start the before starting engines checklist. "The embassy" (Their words) they said had not released them to the airplane until it was almost too late. I did not let them board, but called the aircraft commander and he then dealt with the problem.

~~After the press departed, we started engines and taxied for takeoff.~~ *LJM*

When the passengers were all loaded and equipment and personnel cleared away from the aircraft, I directed a crew member to make an interior inspection for possible

explosive devices. Finding none, he then acted as my ground crew for engine start.

Takeoff was normal as was climbout until we were at approximately 23,000 feet, when we experienced a rapid decompression.

After obtaining an oxygen source, I proceeded to the cargo compartment to check hydraulic fluid quantity and condition of systems 1 and 2, which were by this time inoperative. At this time I observed that the aft pressure door and part of the ramp had blown out and in so doing carried away hydraulic lines for systems 1 and 2 and sheared off the control cables leading to the elevator and rudder.

After assessing the damage to the airplane, I returned to the flight deck and reported to the commander my findings. At about this time, the pilots discovered that they had no pitch or yaw control. They found after some experimentation that engine power gave some control, as long as the airspeed the airplane was trimmed for was maintained.

*Sign 2. McArthur*  
The flight engineer and I, at this time, went through the emergency section of the Dash-1 and covered the appropriate parts covering the damage. The pilots then lowered the landing gear handle, only the forward mains lowered and the copilot after coordinating with pilot and flight engineer, selected the emergency extend switch for the nose gear. I went to the fiber optics scope at the foot of the ladder to observe whether the gear extended. I could not confirm extension, as I could only see hydraulic fluid leaking. The copilot reported "Green Wheels," or gear down. They then selected emergency extend on the aft main gear. At this time, I went to the crew compartment and began stowing loose gear in the latrine and webbed storage areas. One of the crew members came up from the cargo compartment and I advised him to prepare for possible crash landing. I put on the headset just in time to hear the copilot say, "We're losing it," and the pilot say, "We'll land straight ahead." I then turned around to get in my seat, when I saw one of the loadmasters heading back for the cargo compartment. I got him by the arm and told him to sit down and strap in, that we were going to crash land. He got in the middle seat facing the coat closet. Then another loadmaster came by also heading for the cargo area. I told him the same thing, but he wanted to go help the passengers, so I put him in the seat, then sat down and strapped in. I had only just got my seat belt fastened when we impacted the first time.

The aircraft was almost uncontrollable, but the pilots were able to attempt a landing at Tan Son Nhut. When, however, we were unable to make the field, we were forced to make a crash landing in a swampy area short of the airport.

The first impact was fairly smooth, not at all violent. It seemed that we became airborne again for a few seconds, but then we impacted again, this time more violently. I was thrown about and many objects came flying forward and I was struck in the chest by something (I don't know what). The "aircraft" came to rest upside down, partly on the right side. We all (4) exited through the area where the courier compartment had been.

The area outside was swampy with some ground above water level and much long grass.

The other three crew members that were with me departed for the troop compartment which was about 50 yards away. (I didn't know they had gone at this time as I was disoriented and dazed). I made my way around to the side of the wreckage nearest the troop compartment. I saw the other flight engineer coming from the front end of the wreck, and

asked him how the others were and he said they were all ok. The two pilots and the navigator then came from the front of the aircraft. We checked each other to make sure there were no serious injuries. There were several injured persons and some bodies in the wreckage and we proceeded to remove the injured from the wreckage. The rescue helicopters started to land at the troop compartment and we tried to get one to come to us as we had some infants and two severely injured adults. When the first chopper came, we loaded the four infants on it, and the injured on the 2nd. Then 2 of us tried to go to the troop compartment to help, but we were told to board the third copter.

31. I further state that I have read this entire statement. Initialed all pages and corrections, and signed this statement, and that it is correct and true as written.

## WITNESSES:

Lynn F. McAtee  
(Signature) Lynn F. McAtee

22 Military Airlift Sq, Travis AFB, CA 94535  
(Address)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized by law to administer oaths, this

19th day of May 1975

at Travis Air Force Base, California

(Signature of Person Administering Oath.)  
BERNARD A. WAXSTEIN, JR., Colonel, USAF  
C5A Collateral Investigating Officer  
(Type Name, Grade & Title of Person Administering Oath.)

SWORN STATEMENT

OF

TSGT PERCY D. BRADLEY

22 MILITARY AIRLIFT SQUADRON

TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

16 MAY 1975



**STATEMENT OF WITNESS**

**Travis Air Force Base, California**

**(Place)**

16 MAY 1975

(Date)

I, TSgt Percy D. Bradley, hereby state that  
Colonel Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr., [redacted] has identified himself to me  
as C5A Collateral Investigation Officer USAF

(Special Agent AFOSI, Security Police, Other-Specify)

I do hereby voluntarily and of my own free will make the following statement without having been subjected to any coercion, unlawful influence or unlawful inducement. I am Percy D. Bradley, Technical Sergeant, AF-2-1141, 22 Military Airlift Squadron, USAF. I was assigned to the 22 Military Airlift Squadron, Travis Air Force Base, California, on 17 February 1972. I have approximately 2060 hours total flying time in the USAF and 1006 hours total flying time in the C-5 aircraft. My crew qualification as of 4 April 1975 was Airlift Qualified First Loadmaster and my crew position upon departure from Saigon, Vietnam, at approximately 1600 hours, 4 April 1975, was that of Cargo Compartment Loadmaster.

We arrived at Clark at 1437L, 3 April 1975. After processing through Command, Armory and billeting office we arrived at quarters at approximately 1530 hours. We were legal at 0235 hours, 4 April. I had dinner at the NCO Club and went to bed at 1900 hours, 3 April. We were alerted at 0300 hours and show time of 0400 hours, 4 April 1975. I had breakfast in the Command Post Snack Bar and went to the aircraft. With no on-offload we did a complete preflight of the aircraft. I did the cargo compartment and the flight deck. Later we went back into the Snack Bar where I had a donut and coffee.

We departed Clark at 1013L, 4 April. Arrived at Tan Son Nhut 1251L. I was assigned duties as a guard on the right side of the aircraft. The onload consisted of approximately 152 people in the troop compartment and approximately 140 people in the cargo compartment. These figures are not firm as I was not involved with the onload of the passengers. Loose baggage was loaded on the aft ramp. A baggage loading conveyor was used in the loading of bags. I was standing aft of the aircraft on guard duty as the onload took place. After completion of the off and onload I was the outside scanner for the closing of the aft cargo doors. The engineer scanner was on interphone but the cord wasn't long enough to reach the back of the aircraft. I acted as his extension. We encountered no problems in the closing of the doors. All four ramp to pressure door locks closed and locked as usual, the right side actuator extended first then the left side. The inboard and outboard locks locked and I indicated this to the scanner with thumbs up. Closing of the aft doors as usual, side doors then the center door. I remained there as guard until #1 engine was started. I boarded the aircraft after #4 and #1 engines were started. I connected my mask to a oxygen bottle just aft of the crew entrance door, where I used the scanner's interphone cord for takeoff.

At the time of the rapid decompression I was between pallet positions 1 and 2 just under the flight deck ladder. I proceeded to my mask where I remember stepping over something after donning my mask and the fog cleared I noticed what I stepped over was the flight deck door and Sgt Padgett. He appeared to be hurt very badly. I used my mask on him until Captain Klinker and Sgt Weise arrived to help him. I then walked around to see if others needed help. I found that everyone seemed to be fine. I went as far aft as the wheel well area, from that distance I could see only that the pressure door was gone and that the insulation panel in the cargo compartment was mostly

gone but there were some sections still hanging from the wall.

I began cleaning up disposable diapers on the forward ramp. I started upstairs to get a bag when I met Major Wallace who told me to notify crew members only to prepare for a possible crash landing. After notifying crew members I again went for the bag at which time Sgt McAtee pulled me in a seat and said we were about to crash land.

After the landing the four of us in the relief crew compartment exited the aircraft and Sgt Snedegar, Major Wallace and I went to the troop compartment where we helped get everyone ~~one~~ and on the helicopters and then we boarded a helicopter and landed at Air America passenger terminal. From there we were bused to the hospital in Saigon.

31. I further state that I have read this entire statement. Initialed all pages and corrections, and signed this statement, and that it is correct and true as written.

## WITNESSES:

(Signature)

(Address)

(Signature)

(Address)

*Percy D Bradley*  
(Signature)

22 MAS, Travis AFB CA

(Address)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized by law to administer oaths, this

day of \_\_\_\_\_ 19 \_\_\_\_

at Travis Air Force Base, California

*Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr.*  
(Signature of Person Administering Oath.)

BERNARD A. WAXSTEIN, JR., Colonel, USAF

CSA Collateral Investigation Officer

(Type Name, Grade &amp; Title of Person Administering Oath.)

SWORN STATEMENT

OF

TSgt PETER P. DOUGHTY

22 MILITARY AIRLIFT SQUADRON

TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

16 MAY 1975

## STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Travis Air Force Base, California

(Place)

16 May 1975

(Date)

I, TSgt Peter P. Doughty,  
Colonel Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr., hereby state that  
as C5A Collateral Investigation has identified himself to me  
 as USAF.  
 (Special Agent AFOSI, Security Police, Other-Specify)

I do hereby voluntarily and of my own free will make the following statement without having been subjected to any coercion, unlawful influence or unlawful inducement. I am Peter P. Doughty, TSgt, 22 Military Airlift Squadron, USAF. I was assigned to the 22 Military Airlift Squadron, Travis Air Force Base, California on 2 August 1975. I have approximately 2599 hours total flying time in the USAF and 161 hours total flying time in the C-5 aircraft. My crew qualification as of 4 April 1975 was Loadmaster and my crew position upon departure from Saigon, Vietnam, at approximately 1600 hours, 4 April 1975, was that of Loadmaster.

We departed Clark AFB, R. P. on 4 April 1975 heading for Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN carrying 17 each 105 howitzers and "x" amount of recoilless rifles. Download was uneventful and no problems were encountered. We then proceeded to upload the passengers. At the time of upload at Tan Son Nhut, numerous people were in and around the aircraft including officers and enlisted personnel from the Vietnamese Army and Air Force, DOD personnel and attendants that would be traveling with the orphans. The primary crew members not directly involved with the upload were placed at various locations to be on the lookout for anything out of the ordinary. To my knowledge nothing strange was noted. We put approximately 145 small children in the troop compartment plus an unknown amount of adult attendants and medical technicians. The remainder of the people were loaded in the cargo compartment in a typical personnel combat load configuration. Shortly after takeoff we had a rapid decompression. At the time of the rapid decompression I was in the aft end of the troop compartment in the galley area. I was immediately thrown to the floor for a second or two and then went to an oxygen mask and reported into the Flight Deck. It was at this time that I noticed SMSgt Perkins on the troop compartment access ladder holding onto the frame and being assisted by 1st Lt Parker. At this time I also started assisting Sgt Perkins. I noticed that approximately half the ladder was missing and most of the ramp was also missing. We got Sgt Perkins into the troop compartment and he took over the headset duties while I went forward to assist the medical people in the aid of the passengers. I did not observe anyone being hurt at this time. When I reached the forward portion of the troop compartment I noticed that everyone was starting to sit on the floor or in between the seats as if preparing to brace for impact. There was one child of about 13 years of age who was in the cargo compartment but came upstairs just before the rapid decompression to use the latrine who wanted to go back downstairs to his mother. I told him he could see his mother after we landed but for the time being he could stay up here. I positioned him sitting on the floor with his back up against the forward bulkhead. I positioned myself in the aft latrine and had a crippled child of about 7 years in my lap. After impact and we stopped moving I checked the child I was holding and ascertained that he was apparently unhurt. I then started to remove debris and open a means of egress at the forward bulkhead. I helped a flight nurse, who was upside down against the bulkhead egress the airplane and then the 13 year old child. I then egressed myself to open the escape hatches from the outside. The hatches were already open so we started to remove the passengers. All of the surviving crew members and medical

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PREVIOUS EDITION WILL BE USED

Page 1 of 2 Pages

Doughty is LAT.  
 7.12 OK crippled child

technicians helped in the egress of the surviving passengers.

31. I further state that I have read this entire statement. Initialed all pages and corrections, and signed this statement, and that it is correct and true as written.

WITNESSES:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address)

*[Signature]*  
(Signature)

22 MAS, Travis AFB, CA

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized by law to administer oaths, this

16<sup>th</sup> day of May 1975

at Travis Air Force Base, California

*[Signature]*  
(Signature of Person Administering Oath.)

BERNARD A. WAXSTEIN, JR., Colonel, USAF

C-5 Collateral Investigation Officer

(Type Name, Grade & Title of Person Administering Oath.)

SWORN STATEMENT

OF

TSGT ALLEN R. ENGELS

22 MILITARY AIRLIFT SQUADRON

TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

16 MAY 1975

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Travis Air Force Base, California

16 May 1975

(Date)

I, TSgt Allen R. Engels, hereby state that  
Colonel Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr., has identified himself to me  
as C5A Collateral Investigation Officer USAF.  
(Special Agent AFOSI, Security Police, Other-Specify)

I do hereby voluntarily and of my own free will make the following statement without having been subjected to any coercion, unlawful influence or unlawful inducement. I am Allen R. Engels, Technical Sergeant, 22 Military Airlift Squadron, Travis Air Force Base, California, USAF, I was assigned to the 22 Military Airlift Squadron, Travis Air Force Base, California, on 1 March 1973. I have approximately 2150 hours total flying time in the USAF and 641 hours total flying time in the C-5 aircraft. My crew qualification as of 4 April 1975 was First Engineer and my crew position upon departure from Saigon, Vietnam, at approximately 1600 hours, 4 April 1975, was that of Engineer at the Panel.

We landed at Clark AB in the afternoon of 3 April 1975, I went to the NCO Club to eat, then to the trailers and to bed. Approximately 7-8 hours later we were alerted. This was early morning of the 4th. We ate and pre-flighted Aircraft 68-218. After a short operations delay, we took off, arriving at Tan Son Nhut, where upon we started the download. I did a thru-flight and made out the takeoff data. The takeoff data I worked up was for a TRT Rolling takeoff. Takeoff and climbout were normal until the rapid decompression, at which time we lost hydraulic system #2, followed by the #1 system. With loss of hydraulic systems #1 and #2, you lose all pitch trim control, 2 of the 3 hydraulic systems that provide power for the elevators and the rudders, you also lose power for the left aileron, half the power for the right aileron, one flight spoiler on each wing and one of the two systems that power the flaps and slats. The loss of these systems were handled in accordance with Section III of the 1C-5A-1. "Loss of Hydraulic System No. 2 Pressure.

PROCEDURE.

- a. Engine Driven Pumps - Depress
- b. PTU's - on

Loss of Hydraulic System No. 1 - Quantity

PROCEDURE

- a. Engine Driven Pumps - Depress
- b. PTU - off
- c. System No. ATM - off
- d. System No. 1 Hydraulic Boost Pump - off

Loss of Hydraulic System No. 2 - Quantity

PROCEDURE

- a. Engine Driven Pumps - Depress
- b. PTU's - off
- c. RAT - Retract
- d. Inbd Elevator Left Sys 3 Hydraulic Power Switch - Norm
- e. Inbd Elevator Left Sys 2 Hydraulic Power Switch - off

When completed advise pilot of the situation and items lost with the loss of each system."

Shortly after the rapid decompression I had a loss of the No. 2 hydraulic system.

13

pressure indicated by the two pump pressure low lights coming on. I immediately depressed the two pumps and turned on the 1-2 and 2-3 PTU's. I then had a loss of fluid quantity on the No. 2 system indicated by a decreasing hydraulic quantity indicator. I then turned off the PTU's. As soon as I had the PTU's off, I lost hydraulic system No. 1 indicated by the pump press low lights and a decreasing fluid quantity indicator. I then depressed the pumps and turned off the hydraulic boost pump. The ATM and PTU's were already off. I notified the pilot that we had lost hydraulic systems No. 1 and No. 2 and that we had no pitch trim available. At this time the co-pilot attempted to power the inboard elevators with the No. 3 hydraulic system, but could get no response. We turned back to land at Tan Son Nhut, were unable to make the field and crash landed in a marshy area. After coming to rest we got out and started to help the injured from the wreckage. We had evacuated all we could help before we ourselves were evacuated on an Air American helicopter. We were then taken to the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital where we were treated and released. We spent that night in Saigon and left for Clark AB the next day. *ARE*

31. I further state that I have read this entire statement. Initialed all pages and corrections, and signed this statement, and that it is correct and true as written.

## WITNESSES:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address)

*Allen R. Engels*  
(Signature) Allen R. Engels

22 MAS, Travis AFB CA 94535

(Address)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized by law to administer oaths, this

16th day of May 1975

at Travis Air Force Base, California

*Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr.*  
(Signature of Person Administering Oath.)

BERNARD A. WAXSTEIN, JR., Colonel, USAF  
C-5A Collateral Investigation Officer

(Type Name, Grade & Title of Person Administering Oath.)

(13)



SWORN STATEMENT

OF

1ST LIEUTENANT REGINA C. AUNE

10TH AEROMEDICAL EVACUATION GROUP

TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

5 MAY 1975

## STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Travis AFB, California

(Place)

5 MAY 1975

(Date)

I, 1stLt Regina C. Aune, hereby state that  
Colonel Bernard A. Waxstein, has identified himself to me  
 as C-5 Collateral Investigating Officer USAF.

(Special Agent AFOSI, Security Police, Other-Specify)

I do hereby voluntarily and of my own free will make the following statement without having been subjected to any coercion, unlawful influence or unlawful inducement.

I'm 1stLt Regina C. Aune. My serial number is FV. I'm stationed with the 10 Aero-Medical Evacuation Group, Travis AFB, CA. My home of record in the states is Ohio, Cleveland. I've been on active duty for two years and three months and a flight nurse not quite a year. It'll be a year in July. On Friday morning, the 4th of April, we were alerted by Sgt Smedley, whose one of our Tenth Schedulers, who happened to be out here, trying to work the transition with the combination of the two squadrons, 9th and 10th Aero-Medical Evacuation Group which we were in the midst of combining. We had been previously briefed that Saigon was kind of hottish and we didn't know if we'd be going in or not, and that we would all probably be told that we would be on alert at some time. Anyway, that morning he alerted us at 6:15, and told us to report to the squadron in 30 minutes, and not to worry about bringing any clothes or anything, but bring our flight gear that we would need and that we would probably be starting flights into Saigon. When we got to the squadron, in the 9th Group Building we went to a conference room where everybody was getting assembled and we signed in so that they could keep track of who was coming in and who was getting there and everything. We weren't sure what we were going in to pick up in Saigon, whether it was going to be Embassy people, babies; nothing was real crystal clear on what we were going to be doing, but we were going to be starting to go into Saigon. We were briefed that there would be a crew picked to go in on a C-5. It was finally decided that we were going to fly basic med crew which consists of two flight nurses and three med techs. That's the ordinary crew you'd fly on a C-9 and a 141. It was also decided that they would be mixed crews, both 9th and 10th people. The final crew composition was Lt Wirtz and me, Sgt Gmerek, Sgt Wise and Sgt Hadley. Sgt Hadley is a reservist from the 65th. Sgt Wise and Sgt Gmerek are in 9th. Lt Wirtz is 9th and I'm 10th, so we were a mixed crew. I was the senior medical director of the medical crew. We were told that we'd be taking C-130 contingency kits that the 9th Group keeps here which is med gear on the plane. We went out to the C-5 and were told the orders were typed up and everything ready. Everything was happening fast. The C-5, as far as I know, had never been used for any air evac-type mission. We went out to the ramp and the flight crew was at the aircraft. The aircraft commander, Captain Traynor said that he had never flown an air evac mission which, as a C-5 pilot, he wouldn't have. Some of his crew had though. They had been previous 141 crew members and so they were somewhat familiar with an air evac mission. He just wanted to be briefed on what we did on air evac missions and LtCol Baukus, Chief Nurse of the 9th briefed him pretty much, herself. She briefed him on what we did, which is really that the flight crew has no responsibilities for taking care of any of the patients. That's our responsibility, but we coordinate with them. They have the responsibility for the aircraft. Really, as far as aircraft safety goes, the aircraft commander is in charge, but as far as patient safety and patient problems if we have that, then the medical crew director is to coordinate with the aircraft

commander. This happens sometimes on the 141 when you have to maybe put a phone patch into a doctor because somebody is really sick or you have to turn around and go back. That happened on a 141 flight. But it's just coordinating between the medical crew director and the A/C, but really you each have your own responsibilities. He was briefed on that. He briefed us a little bit on the aircraft and he said when you get on he would have his flight crew walk us around the plane. I'd flown on a C-5 as a passenger one time, but I don't believe the rest of the med crew had been on a C-5. When we got ourselves settled on the plane, the loadmasters did give us a walkaround and briefed us on the emergency equipment. The flight to Saigon was uneventful. It was just a routine-type flight. The A/C had told us that when we land in Saigon, because we didn't know what we were going to be getting into or exactly what we were going to be picking up, he would prefer that the crew would all stay on the plane. He would tell us who and when he wanted anyone to get off the plane. He had talked to the loadmasters and told them that he wanted medical crew to stay up on the flight deck, so when we landed at Saigon, the loadmasters told us just to leave all our medical gear in the troop compartment. They were going to pull the ladder up and we could go on down to the flight deck and stay up on the flight deck until we were notified of what we were actually going to be doing, which is what we did. We went up to the flight deck and stayed there talking among ourselves while Captain Traynor went in to find out what exactly we were going to be doing. Later, a lieutenant colonel, who I had not seen before and do not know, came up to the flight deck and said we were going to be taking about 230 babies. He thought they were around the age of two with a fewer older ones like 6, 7, 8, 9 and about 40 escorts. I said to him, "Were they sick babies? We wanted to know the conditions of the children." He said, "No, they were well babies. They weren't sick." I was told that the escorts were secretaries and people that volunteered to escort these children out because they wanted to get them out of Saigon too. A few I believe must not have been American citizens. They spoke with British or Australian, New Zealand-type accents. Then I asked him about customs, carrying all these people on manifests, because I didn't know how on earth, you know, our manifest is very different on an air evac mission and you usually know ahead of time. We have regular forms to fill out. I knew I couldn't do a regular manifest, as far as names of all these people. He said that would all be taken care of. The customs was going to be taken care of and we wouldn't have to worry about anything like that when we were starting to emplane the babies. Then I asked how they were going to bring these children to the plane. Because I thought, 2 years old, they're not going to walk to the plane even if they are two years old, but I think many of those children were much younger because all the babies upstairs, most of them could not walk. They had to be carried. He said they had buses with the child-care workers who had been taking care of these babies at the orphanages, who would carry these children out to the plane. What we had to do, since the ladder to the upper section of the C-5 (troop compartment) was very steep, was line the entire stairway and just hand the babies up. We had decided to put the babies upstairs because we thought we could secure them best up there and some adults as well as half of the med crew. We had already split up the five of us. I was going to stay downstairs. Lt Wirtz was going to stay upstairs. Sgt Gmerek was going to stay upstairs and the other two med techs, Sgt Wise and Sgt Hadley would be downstairs. The flight crew helped us then emplaning the children on the plane. The flight crew and the med crew together decided how the babies and their escorts were to be carried in the cargo compartment. We just kind of debated the best way to do it amongst ourselves. The only way we could decide was to take the blankets that we had and put them on the floor and use cargo tie-down straps. Although we did seat some of the children along the side and use cargo tie-down straps around small groups to hold them in. There was really no other way we could have done it in the cargo compartment.

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There were no seats. There was nothing to really secure them to. With this situation confronting us, we decided to do it the way we did because we didn't know any other way. It seemed to us to be the best way to do it. We felt that putting the small children and babies upstairs in the seat belts, we'd be able to secure them better than downstairs. What we had done was take all the arm rests out of the center of the seats all the way down. We had all the pillows and blankets like they always put on a MAC flight for passenger comfort. We used those to pad the babies. We fit them in tightly and padded them in. We figured that way they wouldn't be able to squirm out. They would be better protected that way and they would probably wiggle out of the cargo tie-down straps downstairs. We still had to put a few of the babies downstairs because we couldn't fit them all upstairs. We were really hoping that when we got there we'd be able to get everybody upstairs. We felt it would just be safer for everyone to be upstairs. We had too many people. We put as many up there as we could. We put two babies to a seat and there were no seats left for the crew or for the escorts or for the med crew who were up there. We had to stand. I didn't realize at first that we were going to stand. I thought we were going to sit in the seats and hold the babies and strap them in like we have mothers who want to hold the baby on a 141. Talking with the other flight nurses afterwards, they were saying they felt they were better off standing because they could watch more of the children in case any of them started to slip out. They were pretty active when we first got them on. They were crying, fussy, but as we climbed to altitude they were all falling asleep. When we finally had most of the babies on, I said now we can bring the adults and escorts on. We sent some of the escorts up with the babies that were upstairs and we kept some downstairs and what we did is when we sat the little ones down on the floor of the cargo compartment, we sat some of the escorts with them so that they could, because we only had the cargo tie-down straps to keep them down anyway. We sat them so that they could reach all the kids they were with so that they could hold them. Hold them down and watch them in case they wiggled out on takeoff. Some of the children had little hospital-type bracelets on. Some had their names on around their neck. They had little cards on a little string around their neck. It just had their name. All the records are all gone because they were downstairs. We had secured the baby food and all the diapers and everything. We had put all the people downstairs in the forward part of the cargo compartment. The A/C had suggested that because it would be a little quieter there. He said we should keep them forward. It doesn't get so much vibration. It doesn't get so much noise in the front part of the plane. That's what we did. They were forward in the cargo compartment. They were not toward the rear of the plane at all. What we had back there was the diapers and the baby food, the babies records and the set of med gear they brought in on the 141. We had secured the other med gear in front. We took some stuff out and took some stuff upstairs and secured them behind the loadmaster's seat. The rest of the med gear is too heavy to carry, it's too awkward to carry up to the troop compartment. We just took some stuff out in plastic bags that we thought we might need upstairs, and took that up and left some down there. They secured the med gear from the 141 back there with the suitcases that they put on, and tied everything down. After we took off, everything seemed routine. I was sitting along the side and Col Willis was sitting next to me. Capt Klinker, the other nurse from my squadron, was sitting on the other side of me. ~~We were just~~<sup>then</sup> there was a lady with a cast on, we were kind of watching her because she was apprehensive about the flight. She started to get sick after we took off and I suggested to Capt Klinker that we had better ~~go~~<sup>go</sup> over and do something. So we both got up and walked over to her and got two of the med techs, Sgt Paget and Sgt Wise, I think that's who it was, and got

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her and laid her down and got some blankets and everything and propped her up. And I said to Capt Klinker, "I'll go up and get her some medicine," because she was having pain and she was really uncomfortable and I said, "I'll go up and get her something." The narcotic kits were upstairs. All the medicines were up there. It seemed to me out of the corner of my eye I saw the rest of the flight crew, you know how the engineers and loadmasters go around and do their routine checks. It seemed to me that I remember seeing them going around just doing their routine checks. No indication anything was wrong, just simply routine. The A/C had said when we started out that he would be sure to have a loadmaster in the cargo compartment and upstairs in the troop compartment always on headset so we'd be able to communicate, we could just immediately communicate with him so that nobody, none of the crew, would be out of communication with the other part of the crew. So that we all knew what was going on. I went up the stairs and I went up to the galley back there where the grating is on the floor. I pulled a med kit out from behind the seat and I opened it up and I got the medicine out and Sgt Parker was back there. He was on the headset at the time I think. He leaned over and asked me if there was anything I needed. I was closing up the med kit and that's when we had the rapid decompression. It was just like one huge explosive sound. It was a typical rapid decompression. I had experienced this in training in flight school. In the altitude chamber they take us through a rapid decompression. They simulate one on a C-9 mockup that they have at flight school so you have like two experiences while you're in flight school. Sgt Perkins, one of the loadmasters was on the ladder coming up. He was really coming up right behind me practically. Of course, the ladder was ripped out from under him and he was left half hanging on the troop compartment floor and half hanging out over the edge. One of the loadmasters was sitting right there and grabbed him and held onto him. I don't know how I got from where I was to where I went, but I went over to where the first row of seats are, so I must have gone around them. I knew we had to get oxygen. The one loadmaster was putting the walk-around bottle on. The oxygen masks had all deployed. I thought I've got to pull some of them to the loadmasters over there. The one had his walkaround on and I got one to reach the one loadmaster and he managed to pull Sgt Perkins up. I put one on and I made sure the adults put one on. Nobody panicked. Everybody was fine, as if this happened on every flight. The babies were all half asleep anyway and I'm sure they got a little anoxic, but they were very relaxed anyway so what the rest of the crew was doing was taking an oxygen mask and going along the row with the babies and giving them oxygen. By that time, we were down to safe altitude where we didn't need oxygen anymore. One loadmaster was still on the headset and he said that the A/C said we were down below 10,000 feet and that we were going to try and go back to Saigon. He thought he'd be able to get the gear down. He thought we'd be able to land. I remember just looking, well I had looked out the back of the plane, there was just nothing there at all, except for two or three suitcases that managed to stay right on the edge. All the cargo tie-down straps that had been around them were gone, but they were just sitting there right on the edge - on this jagged edge of what must have been the ramp. All I could see was the water. What we did then, we went around and resecured all the babies. Of course, I didn't know what was going on downstairs. We had no way of knowing what had happened downstairs or what, no way of getting back down there even. But evidently some people from flight crew that had been on the flight deck had gone down and they said everybody was pretty calm down there too. We had no way of getting down to the cargo compartment since the ladder was blown away. In fact, I remember then we said, I don't think any of us expected a crash landing. I don't think we realized or the A/C maybe didn't realize yet at that point either, how much damage had been done to the plane. Because the loadmaster said

we're going to have to use the slides to get out. We'll deploy them as soon as we land. Who do you want to go out? I said, "The two med techs, Sgt Hadley and Sgt Gmerek," and they both said right away, "We'll go out. We'll each go out a slide and then we can start." That would be our only way out. We said okay. We just went around securing the babies. I remember saying to one of the adults who was trying to stand up, not to stand up, to stay down because I didn't expect us to have an easy landing. I didn't expect to crash, but I didn't, for some reason I didn't expect it, from what they said we were going to try to land and I know they've had RD's and been able to land the plane. I just said, "Stay down and just watch the kids" and that's what we did. That first impact was really a surprise. I was in the aisle sitting on the floor, midway in the troop compartment, watching two rows of babies. Sgt Hadley was in front of me a few rows forward and Lt Wirtz was behind me a few rows. She was inside a row. Sgt Hadley and I were both in the aisle. I don't remember where everybody else was. Sgt Parker and Sgt Perkins, I believe, were behind me. I believe Lt Goffinet was in front up near the latrines and I believe Sgt Doughty was up there, but I'm not absolutely positive. Those are the only two people I'm sure of. Hadley was in front of me and Lt Wirtz was behind me. Everything happened so fast. And we couldn't see, of course. There's no windows, except the emergency window exits. As far as I know, because from what I could see everybody was down toward the floor, and watching the babies and trying to keep them in, but also in a sense bracing themselves. Then we impacted. It's like a moment without even thinking. I just know it happened and I don't even remember what I thought. I don't even think I was afraid. I don't know, it was just that split second. Then I remember Sgt Hadley. He told me later he jumped up, but he went over my head and I thought he flew over my head. I must have tried to reach up and grab him because I let go and that's when I started sliding down, I remember I must have just slid all the way down the aisle past the latrines and ended up on this pile of rubble. But the second impact was kind of like, after we impacted the second time, it was sort of like a speed boat going through water. This water was all mud that was pouring in. We had been separated I guess from the rest of the aircraft and we were just like an independent little part of the plane. We were just tearing through there, at what seemed like a tremendous rate of speed and all this mud was just pouring in. We were just completely covered with it. All I can remember is a speed boat going, speeding right through that mud. I didn't see anybody. Of course we had no lights; it was completely dark. I remember I was on this pile of rubble and I knew I could tell that my foot was broken immediately, but I knew at the same time I had to get up and we had to get everybody out of there. I got up and Sgt Perkins was standing up there. He was back in that area and I knew his leg was hurt pretty bad. His was hurt in the RD. I don't think it was hurt as bad in the actual crash as it was when the ladder was ripped off. He said we've got to get these kids out. Then I saw Sgt Boutwell who was a member of the other med crew that had come on, and Sgt Hadley and they were throwing the window exits out. They had gotten them open. I remember taking one sort of fast walk toward the back, toward the galley, of the troop compartment, just to look to see as much as I could as to how the babies were doing. Then I remember seeing that the slides had started to inflate in the plane. It looked like the babies were okay so we just started grabbing babies and getting them out. Then we had to get some of us outside too. So I crawled out one of the window exits. I'm not real certain which one, I just remember I crawled out with some babies. Sgt Perkins started handing babies out. Then I thought when I got out,

14  
Aisle in 1st  
sitting on floor  
Troop Comp.  
HADLEY was in front  
A few rows  
Wirtz was behind  
A few rows - she  
in side a row.

Aisle  
Rear of A/C



I looked over it was like to our left was what had to be the flight deck and the cockpit. And I just thought, "Everybody is dead." I looked back and I could see the tail and I could see people, evidently coming out the other side of the troop compartment. I thought all the flight crew was dead, until all of a sudden I saw them come running over. Major Wallace, was the first one I saw. He came running. It looked like he was running on air, never touching the ground, and I realized they seemed to be okay and they came running over immediately and we just kind of made a line and started taking the babies out. It seemed a long time and yet it was very fast, the helicopters came in and must have known we were down and where we were. It was probably five minutes at the most before they started coming in. We were just handing the babies out in assembly-line fashion. Passing them from one to another and getting them out. We were just grabbing them two and three at a time, as fast as we could grab them. I wasn't there for the whole evacuation. Because after awhile I couldn't bend over and I couldn't stand up anymore because of my foot and my back. I don't remember exactly what I said, but I know the next thing I remember is that Sgt Hadley and Maj Wallace were helping me get into the plane or helicopter and I remember saying, "Well, let me hold some of the babies." I could hold some on my lap. I did. They took me in the helicopter and the ambulance to the hospital on a litter, and I remember seeing them just put some babies on it. So I held some of the babies on the litter with me when I went to the hospital. I don't think I passed out, but I don't remember what happened at that moment. I knew I couldn't bend over and I started to drop the babies I was holding. For that minute I don't know what happened, but I know the next thing I remember was being put on the helicopter. I have four broken bones in my right foot. I've got a cast on it now, and a puncture wound of some kind I guess on my leg which is also covered by the cast. A compression fracture of L-3 in my back. Just cuts and scrapes and a laceration on my elbow that healed up really well and tons of black and blue marks. I'm green from head to toe, but really, considering all things, my wounds weren't really terribly serious. When we read the paper we got very discouraged because it sounded like more than half of the people didn't survive and I think that it should be the other way around. I think we had more people upstairs than down, really. We had a hundred forty-five babies upstairs. I would say there were only about 130 people downstairs. That would be my estimate. Everybody has asked how the crew behaved and I really feel like everybody did it as if they did every day - probably sounds stupid to say they did it as if they did every day, but nobody - even during the whole egress from the plane, after the crash, wasn't like anybody had to take charge saying you do this or you do that - they kind of fell into line and just did it.-----

None  
Scissors  
of T.C. R.C.A.

14 None

31. I further state that I have read this entire statement. Initialed all pages and corrections, and signed this statement, and that it is correct and true as written.

WITNESSES:

Regina C. Aune  
(Signature)

REGINA C. AUNE

(Signature)

(Address)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized by law to administer oaths, this

5<sup>th</sup> day of May 19 75

at Travis AFB, California

(Signature of Person Administering Oath.)

BERNARD A. WAXSTEIN, JR.

Col, C-5 Collateral Investigating Officer

(Type Name, Grade & Title of Person Administering Oath.)

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SWORN STATEMENT

OF

1ST LIEUTENANT HARRIET GOFFINET

9TH AEROMEDICAL EVACUATION GROUP

CLARK AIR BASE, REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

15 APRIL 1975

## STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Clark AB, Republic of the Philippines

(Place)

15 April 1975

(Date)

I, Harrietz Goffinet, First Lieutenant, U.S. Air Force, hereby state that  
Colonel Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr. has identified himself to me  
 as C-5 Collateral Investigation Officer USAF.

(Special Agent AFOSI, Security Police, Other--Specify)

I do hereby voluntarily and of my own free will make the following statement without having been subjected to any coercion, unlawful influence or unlawful inducement. My name is Lt Harrietz Goffinet. I am assigned to the 9 Aero-Medical Evacuation Group, USAF at Clark AB, Republic of the Philippines and my serial number is My home address in the U.S. is Indiana. My DEROS is 2 May 1975. We were alerted at six o'clock in the morning of 4 April 1975 and over the phone we were told that we were going to Saigon on a C-5. We got to the squadron, found out which crews were on the C-5, lined up crews to follow them should we need any follow-up aircraft. I ended up on the second medical crew that was aligned. We left Clark somewhere around noon on the 141. We landed at Saigon and we sat on the ground for approximately 20 minutes before we found out for sure that we weren't going to be taking any orphans back to Clark on the 141. Apparently we were just going to be carrying adult passengers. The medical crew decided to have the co-pilot phone patch back to Clark Ops, requesting permission that we be able to transfer to the C-5, since there really wasn't any need for us on the 141 and we realized that probably we could be very well used on the C-5. Clark Ops gave us the okay. We went ahead and transferred all of our medical gear, all of our personal belongings, and the entire medical crew onto the C-5. There were quite a few vehicles around the C-5 and it seemed like a lot of confusion. There were ladies who had brought the orphans to the aircraft sitting around the rear loading ramp at the bottom of the stairs. The emplaning seemed very orderly by this time. The ladies apparently were to accompany the children. They were American females in civilian clothes. They were the ones being emplaned. I walked up the stairs with them and immediately went up to the troop compartment. I did not come down after that so I do not know anything else that went on on the ground after that. The upstairs in the troop compartment was just really a scurry of activity. The crew was working. It was very very hot. There was perspiration pouring off of everyone. There were two babies to a seat. They were all padded with pillows and seemed to be doing very well but there was a lot of crying and screaming going on because most of the kids were scared to death. There were several of the civilian ladies working upstairs, I don't know how many. By this time we were just trying to cool the kids down, trying to quiet them down, checking seat belts, checking pillows again to make sure that everyone was secure. We had the older children looking after the younger children who were seated in the seats next to them. We had really a whole bunch of bottles that were pre-filled with juice and water. We started giving the babies bottles, trying to catch the ones that were screaming the loudest first to try to quiet them down because when they quieted down the rest of them did too. I have no conception of how long we were on the ground from the time I got on the C-5 until the time we took off. Individuals upstairs were Sgt Greg Gmerck, Lt Marcia Wirtz, Sgt Hadley, Sgt Doughty, one member of the flight crew, Sgt Parker, a member of the flight crew, Sgt Boutwell must have been there but I don't remember seeing Sgt Boutwell. We positioned ourselves one crew member to a row of seats and one of the civilian lady helpers to a row of seats so that it would eliminate some of the confusion and none of the babies would be neglected.

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HARRIET  
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I believe I had about 16 or 18 babies to take care of. A lot of them by this time were asleep, so it just was a matter of holding the bottles for those who couldn't hold them, making sure that everybody stayed in their seat that they didn't wiggle out of their seat belts and that the padding stayed in front of them. Like I said, we were all assigned to one area and not many of us moved from that area. Upstairs in the troop compartment in the aft, near the tail where the galley is, is where the troop ladder is located. The forward part of the troop compartment contains the latrines. I was in the very forward part. I was the most forward crew member. I was responsible for the six seats across from the latrine and the two seats in front of the latrine. The seats were all full so on take off the crew members were standing. We braced ourselves against the back of the seat and had no trouble whatsoever in retaining our stance because we didn't take off at that sharp of an angle apparently. I really can't give you any accurate account of how many American civilians were upstairs, but I would say maybe --- I remember five for sure. I believe it's five, at least four that I remember specifically. They were all females. There were no males that I know of. As far as I know no crew members, flight and medical, or civilians had seats. We had two babies in each seat and every seat was full. We took off and just continued with what we had been doing on the ground, trying to quiet the babies. By this time most of them were going to sleep because it had gotten a little cooler when we took off. Most of the babies were asleep and we just were holding bottles for those who needed bottles, holding and trying to quiet those who were really loud, and constantly checking the seat belts to see that the kids did stay in the seats. The next thing I remember is hearing a loud pop and seeing all this condensation all over the interior of the aircraft. I also remember seeing pieces of what apparently were insulation material of the aircraft. They didn't come off the sides of the cabin but they were loose, especially a piece over the right exit was hanging loose. It wasn't down by any means but it was hanging loose. The exit was on the right side of the aircraft, about in the middle of the troop compartment. As far as I can remember all of the oxygen masks in my part of the cabin deployed, every one of them. I didn't look around to see what anybody else was doing. There was one, this child is really fuzzy in my mind. He must have been about 12 years old but he was an American boy. He was in one of the latrines. There was also a little child with braces in the other latrine, so I had both these little children grab an oxygen mask, or I grabbed one for them and gave them to and put one on myself because I know that my level of consciousness isn't very good. <sup>under the time</sup> I just grabbed the other oxygen masks and passed them down the row to the babies. We just took the oxygen masks and tried to pass the ones we had available to the babies so that each baby got a whiff. We realized that we couldn't be high enough that we would need oxygen for that long because we hadn't been flying for that long. It seemed like just a couple of minutes to me; now I'm sure it was longer. I can't really describe the noise I heard. I didn't hear any woosh and I didn't feel any pull or anything. I just felt it get a little cooler and it was sort of a pop. It was just almost a classic textbook rapid decompression, the way we had learned it at flight school, which is why I think everyone reacted so well, because we had been through it before at flight school in a training situation. We kept passing the oxygen masks back and forth to the babies and, of course, I think every crew member kept their own oxygen mask on because that's one thing we always learned. If you are no good, you can't help anyone else. I don't remember who it was that came back and said that we were low enough that we didn't need oxygen. All

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the activity apparently was going on in the aft part of the troop compartment because I believe that's where the flight crew members worked. One of the load masters came up the line, briefing us, telling us what had happened. I asked him as he came up the line and he said the whole rear end of the aircraft blew out. We just started again restrapping babies, tightening down straps. We knew we were really in trouble and even though we had prepared ourselves for a crash landing by bracing ourselves in the seats --- I can't speak for other members of the crew --- because I was so busy with my row of seats and myself and the kids in the latrine. I knew we were in trouble. I knew there was a good possibility that we would probably crash land. We were told by the load master that we were turning around and going back to Tan Son Nhut. For one thing I knew that we couldn't be that far out because we had not been going that long and the logical thing to do would be to go back to Tan Son Nhut. One of the load masters came back and got the children that were standing in the latrines settled for me. He backed one of them up against the bulkhead because we didn't know how much time we had. We didn't want him walking around in the cabin to try to get back to his seat, which apparently was in the aft part of the troop compartment. So we set him next to the bulkhead with his back braced against the latrine. The load master sat in the latrine with the little child with braces on his legs, protecting him the best he could. I got between two rows of seats --- between my two rows of seats --- for my babies and braced myself just as well as I could. Like I said, I have no idea what the other crew members were doing except that I do remember looking up the aisle and not seeing anyone so everyone must have been between the seats at this time. I felt we were really in trouble, but the flight crew was so optimistic and so reassuring that even though I knew, in the back of my mind that we would probably crash land, and we were all ready for it, it didn't really sink home until initial impact. I remember before we impacted, when the load master came back and said the whole rear end of the aircraft had blown out, I remember thinking I wonder what happened to the people downstairs. There's a hole in the forward part of the troop compartment where you can see down into the cargo compartment. I could still see the people down there on blankets underneath the cargo tie down straps. They seemed very calm. I don't remember seeing any crew members working or anybody walking around but I do remember the people strapped in downstairs. On initial impact, I saw flames and felt all this hot air, and cinders hit me in the face because I was facing forward and I was the forward most crew member. Apparently it came up from the hole in front of the flight compartment where you can look down into the cargo compartment. I was in between the second and the third last row of seats because there are only, I believe there are only two seats in the very last row across from the latrine, because the latrine sticks out in the aisle a little to the best of my recollection. It was on the left side. I was braced on the left side, the latrines are on the right side. I don't remember anything after initial impact except tumbling around a whole lot. I don't remember any other impacts. From what the flight crew said later, we impacted three times. I got thrown toward the forward part of the bulkhead and I was covered up with something. I believe it was the pieces of insulation on the inside of the cabin that were torn loose on initial impact. It all went forward but I went forward first and I remember being covered with mud. I remember mud spraying into my face. The next thing I remember is being on my head after we had finally come to a stop and being buried underneath pieces of tin and I believe somebody was on top of me but I don't remember who. One of the load masters pulled me out, or pulled the sides of the siding or whatever this material was off of me. I believe it was Sgt Doughty, because Sgt Doughty was the one flight crew member back there with me. I remember getting up and Sgt Doughty pointing to the hole or opening in the aircraft. The last

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thing I remember before we came to a stop was flames. I realized that somebody was halfway through that opening, or part of the way through that opening. I remember thinking if we have to use this as an exit we have to get him out. I crawled out the hole and tried to pull him out of the hole. Then I realized that my collarbone was broken because I couldn't pull on him effectively. The 12 year American boy I have described earlier was by this time, standing outside. He had apparently crawled through the hole too. Apparently he was not hurt. He crawled through the hole and he started to get really upset and scared and he said we're all going to die. I said, "No we're not. Now you have to help me get this man out of the exit because I can't pull on him." He tried to help me but we just weren't strong enough between the two of us. The man was Sgt Parker, one of the flight crew members. After this I don't remember seeing the child. I have no idea what happened to him. By this time Lt Wirtz had come around the left side of the aircraft and looked to see if I was hurt. I looked to see if she was hurt. I was still outside the aircraft. I had gotten out through the front. We tried to pull Sgt Parker out but we couldn't get him out between us and by this time I realized that the hole was big enough that if I could get through with Sgt Parker in the hole, and if we needed to use it as an exit, we could. Somehow I got back in, I don't even remember getting back in the aircraft and Lt Wirtz went back around the left side of the aircraft, because by this time we could see the flight crew coming across the rice paddy. Somehow I got back into the troop compartment and I remember there was a lady on the floor in front of the doors of the latrine. She was one of the civilian women who was helping us. Sgt Doughty was standing back there kind of looking around just to see what we had to work with. Where to start, because I just couldn't believe that it really happened. Everybody started functioning right away. While I was still outside I remember seeing an airplane go over and then it seemed like just a very few minutes, the Air America helicopters came. I crawled back in somehow and started carrying babies out because I felt we just had to get the babies out first. I couldn't use my left arm very much at all, so I just tried to unfasten the seat belts as best we could. We just grabbed babies by shirts and diapers and anything just to get them out. We weren't sure that we weren't on fire. We could see a piece of wreckage burning, to the forward and left of us but we weren't really sure what was burning, whether we were even burning and we were just thinking we have to get these babies out as quickly as we could. The only crew members I remember inside the troop compartment were Sgt Perkins, seated by the left exit with his leg splinted with one of the children's crutches, handing babies out the exit and Sgt Doughty was handing babies up the aisle. I tried to give them to him and then he tried to pass them out the exit. I don't remember anybody else. It was just like it was tunnel vision. Get a baby, carry him to the exit. Go back, get another baby, carry him to the exit. They were babies in the forward part of the compartment. I remember turning over cushions and seats after we got all the babies off the seats and looking for babies because I found one on the floor underneath one of the cushions sound asleep. We went through the cabin again and again and again. I guess every crew member finally ended up going through the cabin that was available to see that we had everybody out. The babies looked to be in pretty good shape after the impact. I don't remember seeing any injured babies whatsoever until I got to the hospital and then those might have been the babies that came out of the bottom, I don't know. But I do remember that Sgt Parker and the lady; it was very apparent that they were gravely injured. Sgt Parker was still breathing. The lady was grotesquely bent backwards. It was apparent that she had a broken neck for sure and probably several broken spinal bones. We got some blankets and covered them up. I believe it was Sgt Doughty who got the blankets to cover up the two injured people up front. Sgt Doughty also helped me carry babies and we

Continued/next  
TAB 15

carried babies and we carried babies. Sgt Perkins I remember sitting by the exit saying "Give me more babies, give me more babies." It was evident that Sgt Perkins was injured. I guess injured during the rapid decompression when he was left hanging on the ladder, but I don't remember any of this, but I know he was injured. He splinted his own leg and sat by the exit because he could function that way even though he also had a banged up shoulder. Those are the only crew members that I remember seeing after Lt Wirtz went back to the exit. After we were sure that all babies were out, then Sgt Doughty helped me out the exit and two of the Vietnamese soldiers helped me walk to the chopper. I got out the right exit about halfway down through the seats. Then we took the chopper into Tan Son Nhut. From Tan Son Nhut we went to the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital. There was another lady, one of the civilian ladies, was there with us and we had two children with us. I held one of the children on the way to the hospital and she held another one. At the hospital I remember seeing children seated along the wall who were positively filthy with mud but I didn't see any blood on any of the children. They were just sort of seated there watching everybody go past. They weren't crawling around of anything. The lady who I described as being seriously injured had a daughter on the aircraft, upstairs helping us. I remember before we took off the lady said that her daughter was really afraid of flying so I went up and talked to the daughter. The lady and the daughter were upstairs. The lady is the one who was by the forward latrine on the floor who was not breathing when I saw her. Her daughter had sandy blond hair and had a brown blouse on and was about 19. I do not know her name. I saw her later on at the hospital. I don't remember that she appeared injured. I just remember her sitting behind the admissions desk and I remember I looked for her because I had seen her sometime during the accident. I don't know when but I knew that she was okay and I knew that that was her mother on the floor of the troop compartment. When we got to the hospital, I looked for her to try to find out what had happened to her, to see if she was hurt. I felt pretty certain that she probably knew about her mother. I found her in one of the rooms and just don't remember anything except putting my arms around her. She asked me if I was all right and that's the last time I saw her. She didn't look injured to me, filthy, muddy from the rice paddy but she didn't look injured. I don't remember but by this time things were getting just a little fuzzy. I remember walking around in the hospital trying to find out who was okay as far as the crew members were concerned. I knew something was broken but I wasn't that severely injured. I was still functioning, like my legs weren't hurt or anything. I remember, looking for the other crew members, seeing if there was anything I could do to help in the emergency room. Then I realized that I was in the way because I kept getting bumped and then it hurt. Finally, one of the doctors sat me down and washed my face off because I was covered with mud. I guess when all the mud came in I took it in the face as it came through the hole. I remember one of the doctors telling one of the nurses to please wash this girl's face off and take her to x-ray, but everybody was so busy and they didn't come right away so I just got out of the way and sat down in the chair. Finally, he came over and washed my face off and got the mud out of my mouth. One of the nurses took me to x-ray. I remember seeing Lt Wirtz running x-rays from one department to another, helping, because she wasn't injured at all. I remember walking past Sgt Gmerck laying on the stretcher in the hall as I walked into x-ray with bandages all over his face on his lacerations. I remember asking him how he was doing and he said he didn't think very good. I sat in x-ray for about 15 minutes because they were just so busy with the babies and they came first. One of the flight crew members came in to get his shoulder x-rayed. I don't remember who it was. Finally, they x-rayed my shoulder and one of the Vietnamese nurses took me back to the emergency room where they put a figure of 8 bandage on it. They gave me some, I believe they gave some Demerol. <sup>Demerol</sup> I got really drowsy and really tired, so they put me on a bed and were going to take me to the ward

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but they had decided not to admit me. I requested that they not admit me, because I didn't think I was hurt. I didn't even realize I had the lacerations or the bruises. I just realized that my collarbone was broken and it didn't hurt that bad. I requested not to be admitted. I was going to go with the flight crew and Lt Wirtz and Sgt Boutwell and Sgt Hadley to, I don't remember the name of the place we were supposed to spend the night. I knew that Sgt Boutwell was all right. He was taking care of the rest of us in the hospital trying to keep us together, keep us cheered up. He was really a big morale booster. Lt Wirtz was the same because neither one of them was even sore yet. Lt Aune was laying on the bed in the hall with me. We asked to stay in the hall because it was freezing on the wards. It was really cold and we were all chilled because we were wet from top to bottom. I don't know how long we were there. Time just sort of flew and stood still at the same time, so I have no conception of time. I do not even know what time we were picked up in Saigon. We didn't stay overnight. We saw two of our med techs come walking in. Two of the med techs we've all been flying with since we got here. One of them walked up to us and said would you girls like to go home with us tonight. Of course, we just burst into tears and said, "absolutely" because it was so good to see them because we knew there had to be a C-9 on the ground, if they were there. Lt Wirtz ran and got Lt Aune who they had just taken to surgery to suture up some lacerations, so that she could go back with us. It took them a few minutes to get everybody rounded up and to find out what the conditions of the other people were so they could report it back to Ninth Group and let the C-9 that was on its way in to pick up the other crew members know what they were picking up. I was placed on a litter because by this time I was so groggy I could hardly stand up by myself and I was already getting a little stiff. We went to the C-9. I was emplaned just as we always emplane patients on the C-9. I didn't think my last flight I would be going as a patient. I remember being put on the C-9. It just looked like home because I've been flying for over a year. Whether it was in the air or on the ground, it was home. It didn't scare me at all to get back on and fly. Like I said, it was just like flying in my own bed. I have a fractured clavicle. I had some burns on my ear that I apparently got when we initially impacted and I felt all the flames and cinders. Just a couple of little burns. I have a few bruises. I have a big hemotoma on my leg. I have one underneath my right arm. I have some lacerations on my right leg and my right thigh and bruises all up and down the backs of my legs. I also had a really sore back. They x-rayed it and found nothing. I guess I probably just pulled all the muscles when I was standing on my head after the impact. These are all just minor injuries considering what we had just been through. There was absolutely no panic of any type, anywhere. I know that during the rapid decompression somebody in the back of the cabin was telling the ladies what to do, exactly what to do. I remember explicit instructions on the oxygen masks and to pass them around to the babies. I do remember hearing that. I remember hearing Sgt Hadley who I think was our senior med tech on the C-5 crew. I didn't even know who the crew members, which positions they were flying, because it really didn't make any difference since we were in an unfamiliar aircraft in the first place. He was on the C-5 crew and I think he was charge tech. I remember him yelling "brace, brace." But I don't remember hearing any screams, any panic from anybody. The children were great. They didn't bat an eyelash. They just sat and waited for us to take them out. There were maybe 5 or 6 that were old enough to really know what was going on. Everybody did an outstanding job. Nobody quit until everybody was out unless they just couldn't function like Sgt Gmerck with his broken ribs. He just couldn't, but yet he got at least two babies to the exit before somebody made him lay down. *Nothing follows.*

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31. I further state that I have read this entire statement. Initialed all pages and corrections, and signed this statement, and that it is correct and true as written.

WITNESSES:

Harold M. Goffinet  
(Signature)

(Signature)

(Address)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized by law to administer oaths, this

(Address)

18<sup>th</sup> day of April 1975

(Signature)

USAF Hospital Clark  
at Clark AB, Philippines

(Address)

Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr.  
(Signature of Person Administering Oath.)

BERNARD A. WAXSTEIN, JR., Colonel, USAF  
C-5 Collateral Investigation Officer

(Type Name, Grade & Title of Person Administering Oath.)

(15) Goffinet



SWORN STATEMENT

OF

LT MARCIA WIRTZ

9TH AEROMEDICAL EVACUATION GROUP

CLARK AIR BASE, REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

17 APRIL 1975

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Clark AB  
Republic of the Philippines  
(Place)  
17 April 1975  
(Date)

I, Lt Marcia Wirtz,  
Colonel Bernard A. Waxstein, hereby state that  
as C5 Collateral Investigating Officer has identified himself to me  
USAF.  
(Special Agent AFOSI, Security Police, Other-Specify)

I do hereby voluntarily and of my own free will make the following statement without having been subjected to any coercion, unlawful influence or unlawful inducement.

I am Lt Marcia Wirtz and I am assigned to the 9th Aeromedical Evacuation Group at Clark. I have been flying for four months and I was on the C5 that crashed on 4 April. My DEROS here is March 1976 and my home address is [redacted], Indiana 46410. My social security number is [redacted].

I was alerted about six o'clock in the morning and went into the squadron and I was told when I was alerted that I would be going to Saigon and when I walked into the squadron several other members of the 9th Group were there, quite a few. We were told we would be going on the C5 to Saigon, apparently to bring back orphans. We got on the flight crew bus and went out to the flight line and out to the C5 where we were met by Captain Traynor, the aircraft commander, who briefed us concerning the C5 and told us when we boarded someone would further brief us, since we were unfamiliar with the C5. After we boarded, we took all of our medical supplies and equipment and secured them downstairs in the aft section of the cargo area, then we went upstairs and the two loadmasters or crew members that were on the original C5 crew made us feel very much at home in the troop compartment. They explained to us about the galley section and briefed us on emergency procedures and general information concerning the aircraft. We also talked about removing the arm rests of the seats so that we could get as many babies as possible into the troop compartment and the best way seemed to be to remove the ~~seats~~ and secure the children in the seats with padding. So we decided after we departed Clark and were airborne we would do that which we did later on then.

The takeoff from Clark was easy. I had never been on a cargo plane of that type before and it just seemed very routine. After we were airborne for a short time, Colonel Willis came up to see us in the troop compartment and he sat down with Lt Aune and myself as well as with the three medical attendants that were on board with us, and briefed us as to what we might need to know should we run into any problems on the ground while at Saigon; and he told us that as soon as we had landed we were to come up to the flight deck and stay there all of the time we were on the ground until the orphans and whoever else we were taking back with us to Clark arrived.

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After we landed at Saigon, we went downstairs and walked through the cargo section and up into the flight deck and we received a briefing from either a Major or Lt Colonel, from the Saigon area who told us when we first came up to the flight deck that we probably would be receiving in the neighborhood of 120, I believe he said, something like that, infants, probably under the age of three. He said that we might also be receiving some families of Americans there and secretaries who would be leaving Saigon. We were concerned whether we would be getting any children that were ill and that would require any type of medical help. He told us that they would all be healthy children at this time, but that maybe later the planes that came in would be taking out the sicker children, but that we would be getting the healthy orphans. While we were there and I think we were probably on the ground about an hour and one half or two hours, we prepared the cargo section to receive the people who would be seated there. What we did was to lay down double blankets on the floor, approximately half way back from below the flight deck. As far as I know we were given no direction as to how to prepare the cargo section for passengers and orphans. Lt Aune and myself ~~namely~~ Lt Aune, because she was the Senior Medical Director decided how to do it. We decided we would just go half way back on both sides of the cargo section because it was probably noisier in the back end so we decided we would keep most of the people up toward the front.

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As I remember, I believe Lt Aune had carried some passengers in the C141, which was similar in the cargo section, in this way before and so she said, we'll put down some blankets on the floor and use the cargo straps to secure the people that are down there. When we went downstairs we received the word that we were getting the orphans, but they were still unloading some of the machinery from the cargo section. We stood near the cargo door and watched them take off equipment and the buses pulled up with the children and the children stood outside. It was kind of busy out there, people all around, watching, and observing us, Vietnamese and American. Most of these were Vietnamese soldiers that were unloading this machinery from the plane. When the children were allowed to come on board, I took one or two children up the ladder with me and stayed upstairs from that point on and positioned babies in seats in the troop compartment with the help of the loadmasters and the medical crew. We just put them in the seats and secured them in with the seat belts. As soon as we got all of them on board, even maybe before that, we started passing out juice and water and baby bottles and started to give them fluids before we took off from the airp~~ace~~.

We placed the children generally two to a seat and there was a pillow usually in front of them or at least something that padded them. Before we took off I made a check on every one of those children to make sure that they were secure.

Upstairs with me in the troop compartment, Lt Goffinet who I briefly saw and I asked, "How did you get here," and she said, "I was on the 141 that came over and since we didn't have any babies we decided to come over and help you with all of the infants," and I said, "Fine, because it looks like we can really use you." We had over a hundred babies I was sure of there at that time. Also, Sgt Hadley and Sgt Boutwell whom I don't remember seeing until after the crash, was upstairs with me because he had come over with the 141 crew. Sgt Hadley was assigned with the original C5 crew so he was up there. Sgt Gmerek was upstairs also working with us in getting the babies up there. The children I was responsible for were in two rows about four or five rows in front of the latrine, toward the ~~the~~ section of the cabin. I looked after about two rows of children, about 24 kids. Actually, since Lt Aune was the MCD and she had gone downstairs to work in the cabin, I took it upon myself to actually become the Medical Crew Director (MCD) for the upstairs section and after surveying the situation with all of the babies I decided that it would probably be best that the American women escort and the medical crew members each take maybe one or two rows of children and confine ourselves to them in passing the juice and water and giving them something to drink; so after we took off I passed this back to the ladies and said, "Why don't we do it this way, you stay right here with these children and give them juice and water. Takeoff was uneventful. None of the adults had seats. The female civilians, the medical people, and the crew members were not seated. As I was loading babies on, I wanted to put two children in a certain seat and I believe it was a medical technician came up behind me and said, "We are not putting any babies in that seat because that is going to be where the loadmaster sits, and then later on as we were still taking more babies up someone else had filled the seat, and I said "That seat if filled, Where are you going to sit?" And they said, "Oh, the adults are going to stand." I really did not give that much thought from that point on because of the nature of the mission since apparently we were taking all of the babies that we could get and so I said OK. I believe he said something like, "The pilot said this is OK," but like I say because of the type of mission that we were flying it just seemed like the logical thing to take all of the babies that we ~~can~~ <sup>could</sup> and so we did. We must have been airborne about 20 minutes I would say and I had gone from my seat, my section of babies right there, toward the galley section to get some juice or water for the babies and I was just about at the troop compartment ladder where the grate is there, right to the left of the grate facing the galley when we had the rapid decompression.

Wirtz

I heard what sounded to me like the sound of the rapid decompression that I had heard at flight school. It was just a loud boom and since I was facing toward the galley section, I really was not looking in the cabin area. What I saw right there in that immediate area was the fogging, some very loose and light things just flying around, nothing that would injure you, just some debris-like flying, some loose little papers flying. Looking out into the cargo compartment through the grating and through the ladder section right there I saw sky, and what looked like sea way below. I could see this huge hole and I cannot remember seeing where the airplane started or ended. All I remember is seeing that hole, maybe that is because that was where my attention was focused but I couldn't tell you how much of that plane was there or not because all I remember seeing was that hole and Sgt Perkins on the ladder with only three or four rungs of the ladder left hanging under him. He was hanging on for dear life at the top of the ladder. In my mind I was really frightened and I was putting on my oxygen mask thinking we are going to die now because this is bad news, and so I breathed some oxygen a little bit and I tried to give it to four children that were sitting in the two crew members seats that were facing the flight deck from the back of the airplane. Of course these were tiny babies and they kept pushing them away. But they did not appear to pass out, they just sat there and looked at me, and just pushed the mask away and I kept breathing the oxygen a little bit. I remember seeing Lt Aune standing in the first two rows of the middle section of the troop compartment and I remember mouthing to her, "I am really scared." And of course I am sure it was written on my face, but I remember seeing her standing there and that is what I said to her. Then I looked down and saw Sgt Perkins hanging on the ladder and two other flight crew members who were there were trying to hold on to him and help him up into the troop compartment and trying to give him some oxygen too. After about a minute, I believe, of standing there, one of the loadmasters and flight crew members, whoever he was, was there. He picked up his head set and got in touch with the pilot and he said to me, "It's alright, Lt, the pilot says that he can land it and we are going back to Saigon and he can put the gear down by hand, we can land it, so you can take your oxygen off now, because you don't need it." This sounded good to me at the time, although I was still very frightened and, gradually, after he said that, I was totally convinced in my mind that we really could not land safely that we really were going to crash and probably all of us would die. I was really convinced of that in my mind, but I decided, OK, I will go back toward the section of babies where I was before and try and talk with the ladies and see that everybody remains calm as can be. So at first I slid in between two seats facing forward and on the floor sat with one of the escorts and she took my hand. We talked a little bit, and I asked her if her husband



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was still in Saigon and she said, "No, my fiancée is," and we just talked a second or two and then I decided to go over to the opposite side of the aisle and I braced myself facing forward with my arms ~~out~~ <sup>reached</sup> over the babies and I leaned forward and just stayed like that, and all of a sudden we touched the ground. Again, I was probably four or five rows up from the latrine on the right side of the aircraft kneeling on the floor between two seats facing forward ~~was~~ <sup>with</sup> my body sprawled across the babies that were in that seat. Descent seemed to me to be very gradual, I didn't know when we were going to land, and there was no way to tell, but just all of a sudden what I felt was we bounced a couple of times and then we came to a stop. I just remember bouncing, like a thud, not real hard. I didn't get thrown around, I was just kneeling there across those infants and we just bounced, I had my head down and it didn't seem like a real harsh landing to me from where I was, and when we came to a stop I knew I wasn't hurt and I was so surprised. I was amazed that I was not hurt. I thought I better get up and then when we did come to a stop I saw this explosion and fire and there was some spray of debris and soot flying around in the cabin and it smelled like smoke and I thought we must be on fire too, but it was just the wind or the force of the explosion had sent some of that debris back into our cabin section. So I immediately got up when we came to a stop and went to the exit which was I believe right across from me or very close there and I looked <sup>at it</sup> ~~out~~ because it looked so big and overpowering and I thought, "You'll never get that open" and I stood there a second and I turned around to go to another exit or look for another outlet and then I must have turned back and somebody had already opened it. And so then I got out of the exit and, as I remember, I was the first one out, although there were also two escorts. The exit would be in the middle of the troop compartment on the left-hand side of the aircraft when you are facing the flight deck. So I got out and looked around outside for a second and looked at the troop compartment from the outside and saw in front of us the other section burning, and figured, "Well, our section isn't going to burn because it isn't on fire now and the rest is." I could see that our section had just separated itself from the rest; it was an entity in itself right there. In my mind I thought the cargo section was under us and that that in front of us was the flight deck burning because it had been in front of us, being the logical thing.

So, I looked back in the exit and I said "Why don't you start handing out the babies to me." The other adults were there and I could see the babies were just sitting there, they looked fine. They were all secured in their seats just as they had been when we took off, and I said to one of the adults there, "Why don't you start handing out the babies now, I am sure somebody will come in after us now, let's get them out here." Then they started handing out babies and I went around to the front of the troop compartment and saw the one loadmaster who was bleeding from his head and looked like he

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Wintz

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was very severely injured, and I saw the lady who I had sat with and whose hand I had held. She looked like she was dead. Then I saw Lt Goffinet and I believe she said something to me like, "What are we going to do with these people?" I said, "They are very seriously hurt now or dead. Let's get the babies out." I had either already told the first helicopter that came in or I said I will tell the first helicopter that comes in to bring a litter on their next trip or to send two litters for these people to get them out right away and so I said, "Let's get the babies out." Then I went back to that exit that I had come out and Sgt Perkins was one of the crewmembers on the inside who was sitting by the exit who just kept handing babies out to me until we had them all out. He was injured, had splinted his leg with a crutch, one of the children's crutches, and he also looked like his shoulder was hurting him, but he still kept trying to hand out babies and children. The helicopters came in within three to five minutes after we were on the ground and the South Vietnamese and Air America started taking out the survivors. During this time I was standing by the exit receiving babies from the exit there and passing them along to other crew members and adults who were in the marshy land. There was water, there were parts of the plane in the water. So it was kind of treacherous to just get the babies out of the plane and up on to some level ground where the helicopter could land and get the babies out. It must have taken us probably a half hour or so to get all of the children out and when I saw that the other two people who were seriously injured were going to be moved, I went back into the troop compartment and made a check to make sure all the children were out. I also went up to the galley section, where my purse had been, and there was hardly anyone left in the plane and I thought, "If it is lying out there I am going to get it and Lt Aune's." It was in the debris there and so I picked both of our purses up and took them and went back out of the troop compartment to the helicopters and the one helicopter was coming in to get the lady who I believed was dead, and I got on the helicopter and went with her and we went back to Tan Son Nhut. When we got on the ground there I was still very frightened to be in Saigon itself. I was really afraid of any kind of problems we could have in Saigon, just being there, and as soon as I got off the helicopter, I saw the navigator. I went up to him and I said, "Please don't go anywhere without me because I'm scared to death to be here in Saigon," and he said, "Oh, we won't go anywhere without you, just come on," and he took care of me from then on. It was Capt Langford.

The woman whose hand I held during descent had a daughter on the aircraft, and the daughter was one of the people that came out of the exit right after me and she said, "I think my mother was hurt in there. When you go in, see if she was alright." But that girl

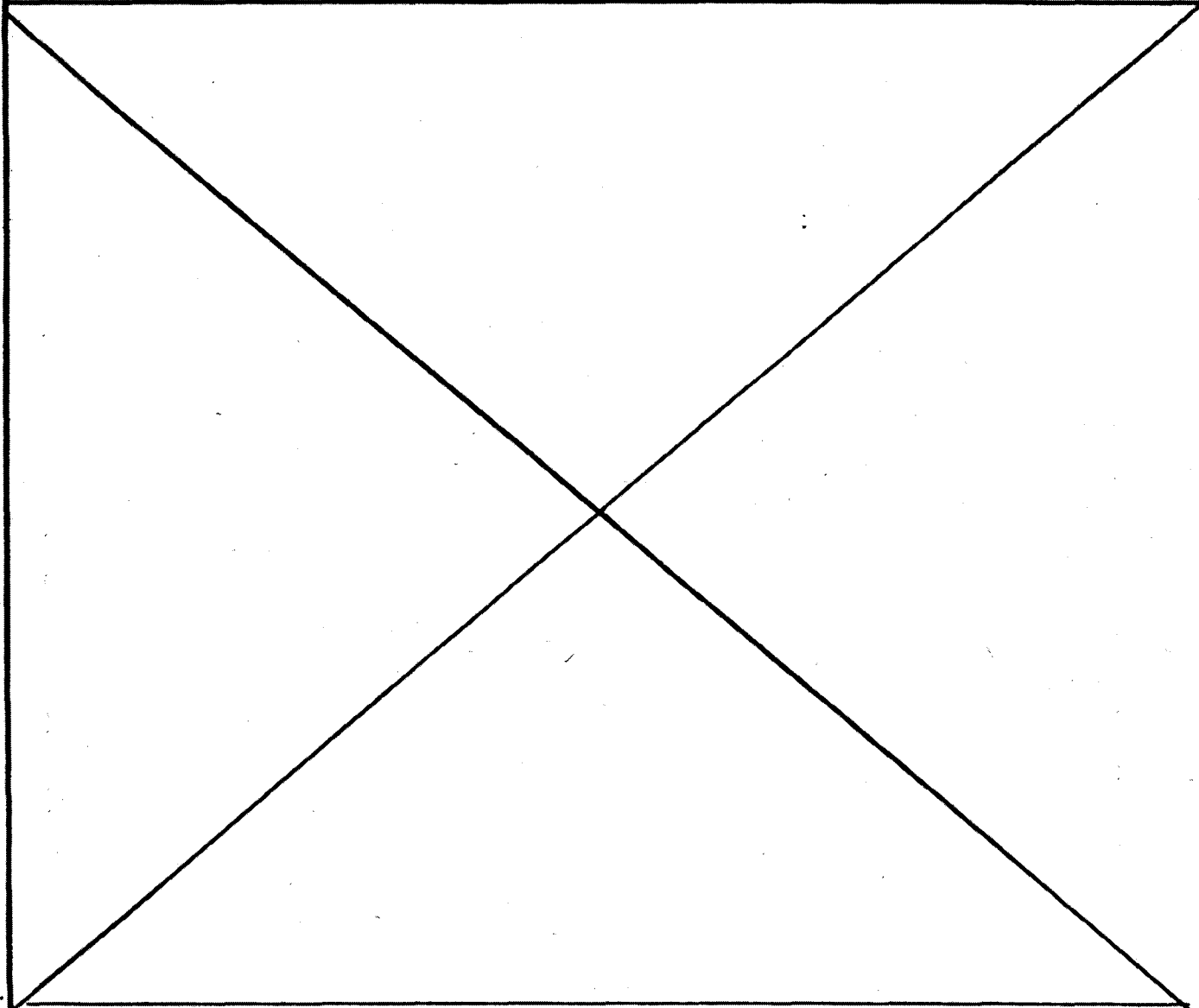
meandered off into the rice paddy. I saw her and another one of her friends, I guess, just walking back toward the tail when we started taking out the passengers. I don't know if she became frightened or shocked or what, but she just kind of walked away. She was picked up later by the helicopter, but she was frightened and afraid for her mother. When the plane hit, her mother was almost directly across from me in the row of babies, directly across the aisle from me, or in maybe the row in front of that section. She was very close to me, so she was on the left side in the troop compartment about ~~nine or ten feet~~ <sup>THE WOMEN'S DAUGHTER</sup> from the forward bulkhead of the troop compartment because in that side of the airplane the seats extended farther forward toward the flight deck because the latrines were on the right side. I don't know if she was braced or not because my head was down on the seats and I was braced and I didn't look up. The friend ~~she~~ walked away with may have been another American escort who looked to be about 21 or 22 and seemed to know about the orphans in that she said to me when we came on, "Please don't give them any milk, because they are not used to milk, the younger children are not used to milk under a year or so and they will really get diarrhea so don't give them any milk." I remember her - she was slender and had a rather pointed nose and tall. Kind of a model-like figure if I <sup>TH</sup> remember right. I know she survived and she was an American, <sup>I BELIEVE.</sup>

She seemed to know about the babies and she did survive, in fact, I saw her at the Tan Son Nhut at the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital walking around, not appearing to have any significant injuries. (Adams)

7m24 When we got to the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital in Saigon, I stayed in one of the emergency rooms, or examining rooms with most of the flight crew who were right there and we just waited while they were bringing survivors in. Then I saw my friend, Lt Aune, and I helped clean her up, clean out her wounds, and I then went in and saw Lt Goffinet in the X-Ray Dept for a minute; and I just kind of made the rounds for a little bit, seeing where the people were and how they were doing.

I feel like the entire medical and flight crew reacted in a totally professional manner from the rapid decompression on, and that our training really paid off. Once we got on the ground, somehow the pieces just started coming together, you know, you have got to try to get people out of the exits and the helicopters you know are going to come in. The aircraft commander especially sticks in my mind as just being outstanding in that he just really had it together and he checked everybody and came around to the hospital in Saigon and asked us how we were, and just reminded us not to give out any information that might be detrimental to making an accurate investigation of the crash. NOTHING FOLLOWS.





31. I further state that I have read this entire statement. Initialed all pages and corrections, and signed this statement, and that it is correct and true as written.

WITNESSES:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address)

Marcia R. [Signature]  
(Address)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized by law to administer oaths, this

18 day of April 1975

at Clark AB, Republic of  
the Philippines  
(Signature of Person Administering Oath.)

(Type Name, Grade & Title of Person Administering Oath.)

16 white

STATEMENT

OF

MSGT OLEN HENRY BOUTWELL

9TH AEROMEDICAL EVACUATION GROUP

CLARK AIR BASE, REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

18 APRIL 1975

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Clark Air Base  
Republic of the Philippines  
(Place)  
18 April 1975  
(Date)

I, MSgt Olen Henry Boutwell,, hereby state that  
Colonel Bernard A. Waxstein, has identified himself to me  
as C5 Collateral Investigating Officer USAF.  
(Special Agent AFOSI, Security Police, Other-Specify)

I do hereby voluntarily and of my own free will make the following statement without having been subjected to any coercion, unlawful influence or unlawful inducement.

My name is Olen Henry Boutwell, MSgt, I am with the  
9th Aeromedical Evacuation Group, Clark Air Base, Republic of the  
Philippines. My local address is 394 37th Place, Clark AB. My  
stateside address is Texas,

At approximately 0630 hours on the morning of 4 April 1975 I received a phone call from TSgt Smith, our scheduler, notifying me of a possible mission, the length of time, and place was unknown. I reported to the squadron at approximately 0715 hours and worked in the office until I was notified that I would be going out on the second mission, a 141 to Saigon. At approximately 1030 the crew bus took us to the C141 where we waited for 30 or 40 minutes, maybe even longer for the crew to arrive. We left, departed Clark Air Base at approximately 1150 for Saigon arriving there approximately 1500 hours local time. After arriving there we were informed by the pilot that the 141 mission had changed, that they were not bringing the orphans back. Someone in our group, either the pilots or the nurses, called in to Clark and got permission for us to transfer over to the C5. It was a medical crew of five, three Aeromedical Evacuation Technicians and two flight nurses. The flight nurses were Captain Mary Klinker, and Lt Harriet Goffinett; Capt Klinker was from the 10th at Travis, Lt Goffinett was with the 9th. The medical technicians were TSgt C. Johnson with the 9th, SSgt Padgett with the 10th and myself.

We grabbed our personal and flight gear and the medical equipment, took it to the C5, put the equipment on the conveyer belt and secured it to the cargo compartment of the C5. There were numerous people standing around. Most of the children at the time that I arrived there had boarded. There were people bringing up baggage to be put on the C5, and a lot of people mingling around. Some people insisted on putting the baggage on the conveyer belt, which I believe were Vietnamese. They asked for assistance in bringing the baggage aboard, so I volunteered my efforts, and by using a sort of an assembly line, we got the baggage aboard as quickly as possible, secured the baggage, then when this was done I went into the cargo compartment securing the tie down straps to the floors of the aircraft and putting them across the children.

17 Boutwell

There were people lined up on both sides of the cargo compartment and we had put blankets down (the blankets had already been put down before I arrived there) and children were laying on the blankets in rows. We used the cargo tie-down straps to secure the children and the adult attendants for safety, or hold on. When this was completed, TSgt D. C. Jonson asked me if I would like to work upstairs in the troop compartment with the other children and I said, "Yes." He took me upstairs as I had never been on a C5 before and introduced me to Sgt Padgett, of the medical crew that had come out of Clark on the C-5.

It is quite difficult to give an estimate of how many children and adults were downstairs. I would say there was much more than 100 children and maybe 25 or 30 adults, other than the crew. The adults were women in civilian clothes, pant suits. Sgt Padgett was the medical specialist aboard the C5. He had worked the 141 before and he assigned me a row of seats just aft of the wing, at the emergency exit all of the way across. They had placed two children to each seat, and he asked me to take care of these children. So I checked to make sure that they were secured by using the seat belts and the pillows and keeping the little tots from falling out. Some of them were maybe three or four years old. The seating conditions were crowded, there were two children per seat, there were no seats left for the adults. There were approximately 15 to 20 adults. I believe there were medical crew members up there at that time, Lt Goffinett from the 9th, Lt Wirtz from the 9th, Sgt Hadley, Reservist from the 10th, myself and Sgt Gmerek. There were at least 5 or 6 civilian escorts up there, civilian women. After making sure that the children were secure, I tried to give them milk or a bottle of juice. I would say there was close to 150 Vietnamese children in the troop compartment. There were no seats for adult personnel that I know of, I believe, they were all used for children. I believe there were 75 seats and there were 2 children per seat. I was working with the children when the aircraft took off and it seemed like we had been gone for about 20 minutes when I heard this loud noise. It was the same thing that I have experienced going through the altitude chamber. I looked up and I saw the compartment with the oxygen masks door come open and oxygen masks come down. It wasn't really a loud noise, it was just a sudden boom, for lack of a better word. It was similar to the noise that I have heard in the altitude chamber when I have been exposed to a rapid decompression. The door opened and the oxygen masks came down, dropped down a short distance, then I remember one woman said, "My God, what do we do now," and I said, "grab hold of the oxygen masks and bring them down and get them as close to the children as you can," because we only had three oxygen masks, "and bring them down and get them as close to the children as you can," and

17 Bostwell

because we only have three oxygen masks per each row of seats and there were six kids. You could tell the difference in the atmospheric conditions, you could smell the difference; I really didn't smell any smoke or anything, just the air smelled different at this time. I remember seeing the paneling from the exit doors close to where I was. I remember seeing it had come loose from the structure of the plane. It seemed that just a short time later one of the crew members, whose name I did not know, came up and said we had descended to 10,000 feet and we didn't have to worry about the oxygen any longer and that we were turning around and trying to go back to Tan Son Nhut and land. During the rapid decompression I put a mask on, and then with both of my hands, gave one of the children some oxygen for a few seconds and then another one oxygen for a few seconds, then repeated it. I was supposed to take care of 12 children but I was only taking care of six at that time. When we got down to 10,000 feet it did not look like any of the children had hypoxia. <sup>Mark</sup> I went over to the other side, someone had taken the oxygen down and let it dangle near the children's face on the other side, too. I went over to the other side and were checking those children out to make sure that they were secure in the plane in case anything else would happen and I remembered thinking for some reason, I was afraid that exit door might blow, I don't know what good it would be for me to sit down because if it blew it would blow inward. It didn't come to me that this was going to be the case but I sat down in the aisle held on to one of the seats and I was checking the children with my right hand when we had the initial impact, with no warning whatsoever.

In describing the initial impact, it was really just a sudden movement forward, we were moving forward, everything was going forward. I grabbed the other seat because the aircraft had not come to a complete stop and I was afraid that I might go into the children with my body. Then we had the second impact and it was fortunate that I had grabbed onto the seat because I did go forward, but I didn't hit any of the children. Sgt Hadley, after the first impact, he came to the row of seats where I was and mentioned something about opening the exit door and then when we had the second impact he was hanging on for dear life and he and I took what seemed like a long time to open up that emergency exit, presumably because it was warped and also possibly because of the structures that had come loose from the top. I felt two impacts. After the second impact everything stopped. I do not remember if the lights went out. I do remember at that time smelling some smoke, after the second impact, I remember smelling a little smoke, I don't remember where it came from. Sgt Hadley, after we opened the emergency exit, left the aircraft and I had

17 Boatwell

1st Impact

started unfastening the children's seat belts and started passing the children out to him. Recognizing that the latrines are to the front of the troop compartment and the galley and the troop ladder is to the aft of the compartment I believe that I was pretty close to midway, just aft of the wings. I was looking at a markup of the seats later. I didn't see the wings, the wings were gone when we jumped out, but I believe I was just aft of the wings. At the time of the impact, I was in between the seats at the exit just aft of the wing on the right hand side, looking forward, right at the exit door. That's the exit that Sgt Hadley and I opened up. After the initial impact Sgt Hadley came to where I was and he was in the aisle and when we had the second impact he was holding on trying to keep the momentum from carrying him forward. He and I opened the escape hatch, it took both of us to open up the escape hatch. I did not feel injured or hurt at this time. He jumped out and I started loosening babies and passing the children out to him.

Boydwell

I really didn't notice what anyone else was doing at this time, my interests were getting the children out as fast as I could and I remember Sgt Hadley asked me if anyone else was alive that could pass out the children. I don't know who it was, but somebody came to our assistance and passed the children out to us. I believe it was a female but I really don't know. I know we removed Sgt Gmerek from the plane; he was walking, he had a lot of blood on him and his chest was hurting, but he was wanting to work and we put him out in the rice paddy and gave him the job of trying to keep the children from falling through the water. While we were working, I stayed with the children after they were passed out, I guess you would call it that, they were evacuated from my immediate area. Sgt Hadley climbed back aboard and started giving other people assistance. What he did and where I do not know because I did not see him any more until we arrived in Saigon. With regard to the children in the seats at least the ones in my area, they did not look hurt at all. They had some blood on them, but I believe it was from Sgt Gmerek. The seat belts had held and they had pillows and blankets in front of them. The seat belts held and they appeared to be uninjured. From my exit, I evacuated about 25 to 30 children. I was inside part of the time passing them out, and then I moved outside. Someone else started passing them out and I moved outside to give Sgt Hadley a hand in receiving the children. Afterwards, Sgt Hadley went back inside the plane and I stayed down with the children. At that time I was putting a few bandages on Sgt Gmerek. I did not see what anybody else was doing. I remember a Captain who was aboard the plane, gave us a hand and in fact he was helping take them to the helicopter; but

from that particular exit I don't recall anybody else except Sgt Hadley and Sgt Gmerek who was sitting in the rice paddies watching the children. I did not notice anyone that was injured or dead except for Sgt Gmerek. The helicopters then came and took everybody out and took me out. I was on probably the last chopper out, in my area. There could have been somebody from the other area, but in my area I went in on the last group. I returned to Saigon, and went on inside the Base Ops and got a drink of water and washed my face off a little bit. I was full of mud. I thought Sgt Hadley did a tremendous job, I wish I would have had as much energy as he had but I being twice his age, I just didn't have as much. He didn't even want to go to the hospital at first but I told him my ribs were hurting a little bit and he said his were too, and we would go get them checked out after everybody else was taken care of. This was at Tan Son Nhut at the 7 Day Adventist Hospital, and after we got there he started bringing out injured from the ambulances and assisting them and also he told one of the nurses that he was a medic and asked her if he could give a hand. She said, "Come on with me," and that was the last I saw of the gentleman. I know he didn't come back on the plane with us, on the C9 with us. He was still working when we left there. I think he did a tremendously professional job. Sgt Gmerek was injured and was subsequently discovered to have some broken ribs. I gave first aid to him, took off his shirt and used his belt and my belt and checked to see if he had any chest injuries or anything. I made a pressure dressing on his ribs and then I applied dressing tape and roller gauze to his lacerations and let him stay outside the troop compartment and watch the children to keep their heads from going under in the rice paddies.

31. I further state that I have read this entire statement. Initialed all pages and corrections, and signed this statement, and that it is correct and true as written.

WITNESSES:

Allen Henry Brantley  
(Signature)

(Address) Texas

(Signature)

(Address)

(Signature)

(Address)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized by law to administer oaths, this

18<sup>th</sup> day of April 1975

at Clark Air Base, R.O.P.

James A. Quanta  
(Signature of Person Administering Oath.)

(Type Name, Grade & Title of Person Administering Oath.)

SWORN STATEMENT

OF

SSGT JAMES A. HADLEY, JR.

65 AIR EVACUATION SQUADRON

TRAVIS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

21 JULY 1975



## STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Travis Air Force Base, California

(Place)

21 JUN 1975

(Date)

I, Staff Sergeant James Alvin Hadley, Jr., hereby state that  
Colonel Bernard A. Waxstein, Jr., has identified himself to me  
 as C-5A Collateral Investigating Officer USAF.  
 (Special Agent AFOSI, Security Police, Other--Specify)

I do hereby voluntarily and of my own free will make the following statement without having been subjected to any coercion, unlawful influence or unlawful inducement.

I am Staff Sergeant James Alvin Hadley, Jr., of the 65th Air Evacuation Squadron, USAF, which is a reserve unit assigned to Travis Air Force Base. I began my 14-day tour of active duty on 30 or 31 March. I left Travis and deadheaded into Clark, arriving there on 1 April. I had made no trips out of Clark since my arrival. I was assigned to the C-5 going to Saigon to pick up some babies and possibly some civilian attendants on 4 April. Our flight to Saigon or Tan Son Nhut was uneventful. The offload was completed without incident. I walked around the aircraft while the offloading was going on. I did not see anyone near it except for two loadmasters and some Vietnamese who were directly at the end of the tail where they were offloading the pallets. There were also a lot of Vietnamese directly behind the airplane just watching the offloading. I was outside of the plane when the buses pulled up to the rear door. They had two civilians there to organize how they were to onload the babies. When they started to bringing the babies aboard, I went upstairs to the troop compartment and helped with the onloading of the babies by getting them strapped down. We padded them in the seats with pillows and blankets. We filled every seat available including two loadmaster seats. There were no seats left for any of the adults. There were approximately 20 adults in my section of the aircraft who did not have seats. Since there were no seats we instructed all the people around us how to sit down and brace yourself and hang onto the nearest support during the takeoff. There were several civilians who refused to follow our instructions. This was the first time I had ever flown in an aircraft where there wasn't any place for the crew to be strapped in. But with the situation as it was, we needed the space for the babies, I felt sitting on the floor was the next best thing.

I went downstairs one time to take two bags of pillows and saw how they were sitting in the cargo compartment - I pulled out some litter straps to help fasten some of them more securely. The people were sitting on blankets with their head and their feet to the ~~side~~ <sup>back</sup>. The takeoff was uneventful. The noise from the engines caused the babies to cry a lot so we were busy during the climbout giving them bottles and taking the larger ones to the bathroom, etc. The rapid decompression occurred during this time. It was a typical altitude chamber rapid decompression. The plane filled with fog. The warning horns blew but I didn't notice the lights brighten perceptibly like they do during a simulated rapid decompression. The oxygen masks dropped down - I grabbed one and started checking to be sure the attendants were O.K. Then we started trying to fit them to the babies but the strength of the plastic hose kept pulling the masks away from their faces - you actually had to hold it on. I had at least 12 babies that I was taking care of. I kept thinking and telling everyone to brace because the plane would go into dive but the pilot did it so smooth you weren't aware of it. There was no panic - everyone was really calm. After we got off the oxygen, the loadmaster and medical people got together and he gave specific instructions about what he wanted me to do after we landed. Once we got that cleared and all the babies

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PREVIOUS EDITION WILL BE USED

Page 1 of 2 Pages

looked good we just sat down in the middle row, Indian style, facing aft and hung onto the chairs. We talked all the way down because actually we really felt we were going to land at the airport. We felt that the pilot had complete control of the aircraft. When we hit the first time - it was no worse than some landings I've had here at Travis when the wind was bad - then there was a slight rumbling which made me think we were just taxiing so I got up and went over to undo the forward right hand hatch. Just as I got it completely undone and was ready to pull it in - we hit the second time and I was thrown onto the seat in front of me. I held onto the babies and the seat. When we stopped, I immediately got up and threw the hatch out and pulled Boutwell (another med tech) up off the floor and told him to start handing me babies. I stood on the hatch to stay out of the water and we got all the babies out. Lt Aune, a flight nurse, was standing next to me helping pass the babies to the helicopter when I noticed she didn't look too good. I suggested that she sit down and she replied she couldn't because she thought her legs were broken. Major Wallace and I helped to get her to the helicopter. We boarded a helicopter when we were sure no one was left in our portion of the aircraft and went back to Tan Son Nhut. I did go to the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital and help with anything I could. When there seemed to be nothing else I could do - I went to the Gray House with the Flight Crew. We left the next day for Clark on a C-141.

HADLEY

31. I further state that I have read this entire statement. Initialed all pages and corrections, and signed this statement, and that it is correct and true as written.

WITNESSES:

(Signature)

(Address)

(Signature)

(Address)

James C. Hadley  
65 AES(Res), Travis AFB CA

(Signature)

(Address)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized by law to administer oaths, this

21<sup>ST</sup> day of July 1975

at Travis Air Force Base, California

BERNARD A. WAXSTEIN, JR., Colonel, USAF  
C5A Collateral Investigating Officer

(Type Name, Grade &amp; Title of Person Administering Oath.)

STATEMENT

OF

SERGEANT GREGORY B. GMERK

9TH AEROMEDICAL EVACUATION GROUP

CLARK AIR BASE, REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

17 APRIL 1975

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Clark Air Base  
Republic of the Philippines

(Place)  
17 April 1975

(Date)

I, Sergeant Gregory B. Gmerek,, hereby state that  
Colonel Bernard A. Waxstein, has identified himself to me  
as C5 Collateral Investigating Officer USAF.  
(Special Agent AFOSI, Security Police, Other--Specify)

I do hereby voluntarily and of my own free will make the following statement without having been subjected to any coercion, unlawful influence or unlawful inducement.

My name is Gregory B. Gmerek, Sergeant, , USAF, 9th Air  
Evac., Clark AB, Republic of the Philippines. My DEROS is 2 December  
1975 and my present mailing address is  
Michigan, 48015. I was alerted at six o'clock on the morning of  
4 April 1975 and was told that I was to be a member of a medical  
evacuation team flying a C-5 to Saigon to pick up Vietnamese orphans. EX-11  
B4

After we departed Clark AB for Saigon we met on the C-5 to decide who was going to be on top in the troop compartment and who was going to be on the bottom in the cargo compartment. We finally decided to see what happened when we got there. We were told there would be about two hours ground time in Saigon so they could load and unload. After we arrived at Saigon and as they were unloading, we started putting down blankets for the people that were going to be on the bottom in the cargo compartment. We did not have mattresses so we put two blankets down. We figured it would be cold down there and they could wrap up in one, and we were going to tie them down with tie down straps, the same type of straps they use for cargo; at least I assumed they were the same. We didn't put blankets down on the entire cargo deck, just up to a certain window. This was because from there on to the aft of the aircraft, where the big doors were, the flight crew said that there would be too much noise and it would be better for the kids to be up in front of the certain window. After this I went upstairs to the troop compartment and started taking blankets and pillows off all the seats so I could make them ready for the orphans. The next time I turned around the orphans were getting on the aircraft. We didn't know how many would be getting on. Also, prior to this, the flight mechanic told me to leave a seat for myself and Lieutenant Wirtz, a flight nurse, and I made sure that we had a seat. But once we started getting the kids, at first I was just putting one to a seat, but then when I saw how many we were getting I started putting a big kid with a little kid in each seat, and strapping them in with the seat belt.

Later I was told that we were going to stand up for take off and landing so we placed orphans in the seats that I had secured for Lt Wirtz and myself. Also at this time I realized that the civilian women

were going with us also, and that they wouldn't have seats either. Anyway, we got them all in and each of us took two rows of children both sides, and we braced, or at least I did, for take off. Each of us had about twenty-four kids to take care of. Lieutenant Goffinett was up in the troop compartment with us along with Lieutenant Wirtz. I believe Sergeant Hadley also came up there. Also, there were at least five or seven civilians, I don't know how many for sure. Lieutenant Goffinett had the first four rows of kids in the forward section of the troop compartment and I had the next two rows.

Some time after take off, I don't know how long it was, but the next thing I heard, was what I thought was a shot. It sounded like it was on the wing, it sounded like a rifle shot. And then a rapid decompression. And then the noise, the rapid decompression noise. It was just like it was in flight school. The oxygen masks dropped and I went and got one and got it on myself first and I didn't feel like it was working right away. I did not feel any hypoxia. I placed the oxygen masks on the children in one row. I then went to the next row and started putting the masks on the children in that row. About five minutes later I looked around and people were taking the masks off and they said it was all over. I knew that we were losing altitude during the rapid decompression, but after that it seemed as if we were flying level flight and I didn't worry about it. I had no real idea what had happened, but I remember that a member of the flight crew told us that we were going back to Saigon and said that something was wrong with the plane, and we would have it repaired. Generally, things kind of went flying through the air and I remember bouncing in seats, falling over, getting wedged in and struggling to get out. I ended up in the front, the very front of the troop compartment by the latrine. I really think that I lost consciousness altogether, but not for very long. I turned around and saw Lieutenant Goffinett. I remember she was all full of mud. And that all I could think about was getting the orphans out, so I just started grabbing children. I was grabbing babies and handing them to Master Sergeant Boutwell and Sergeant Hadley, I believe one was outside and one was inside. I think I might have handed out seven kids, maybe two or three arm loads. Sergeant Boutwell looked at me and said I was bleeding from my forehead, although I didn't think I was bleeding but I couldn't breathe very well, and I wasn't moving very fast. I was very slow, either he or Sergeant Hadley, or both of them, asked if I was hurt and I said, "Yes, I can't breathe" and they said to get out. I got out of the plane and Sergeant Boutwell told me to keep an eye on the kids and he and Sergeant Hadley were getting them out and placing them next to me. Like I said, I couldn't hardly breathe.

The kids, were all just sitting there and Sergeant Boutwell came to me and put a bandage around my forehead and chin and it didn't seem

SMEREN  
ENDS UP IN  
FRONT  
NEAR LATRINE

like very long that I was sitting out there and the helicopters started coming. Two Americans came from one of the helicopters and one came over to me and asked, "What's the matter?" I said that my ribs were broken and he said, "Okay, we'll be back and get you." I just had to keep my eyes closed because of the pain, and then eventually they came over and got me, placed me in the helicopter, and brought me back to Saigon.

31. I further state that I have read this entire statement. Initialed all pages and corrections, and signed this statement, and that it is correct and true as written.

WITNESSES:

(Signature)

(Address)

(Signature)

(Address)

Gregory B. Smith  
(Signature)

(Address)

Subscribed and sworn to before me, a person authorized by law to administer oaths, this

17<sup>th</sup> day of April, 1975

at USAF Hospital, Clark Air Base

Dona A. Wane  
(Signature of Person Administering Oath.)

(Type Name, Grade & Title of Person Administering Oath.)