

## North American F-86A #48-223

February 24, 1954

On the afternoon of February 24, 1954, F-86A #48-223 took off from Gowen Field at Boise, Idaho, for an aerial gunnery training mission. At the controls was Capt. William T. Sproat, with the 190th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, 142nd Fighter-Interceptor Group of the Idaho Air National Guard. Capt. Sproat was part of a three-aircraft flight that proceeded to an aerial gunnery range several miles south east of Boise. While a T-33 towed an aerial target, Capt. Sproat and another F-86A pilot, Capt. Chauncey B. Reese, took turns firing their .50 caliber machine guns at the target. Capt. Sproat and Capt. Reese had different radios in their aircraft, and were only able to communicate using visual signals. After making two normal passes at the target, the flight turned and was about to initiate a third pass when the two F-86As collided. Both pilots ejected, but Capt. Sproat was killed when his parachute didn't open in time. Capt. Reese survived. Both aircraft impacted the ground and were destroyed. An accident review board blamed the incompatible radios as the cause of the mid-air collision. Special thanks to David Larsen for help with finding Capt. Sproat's crash site. Site visited on 11/2/21. The search for Capt. Reese's crash site will resume in the Spring of 2022.



General view of the crash site



F-86A "151-" part number prefix and North American inspection stamp



Part of a .50 caliber ammunition belt





Compressor blades from the General Electric J47 turbojet engine



A component from the fire detection system



Data plate from the fire detection part



Chain and sprocket assembly for the flight controls





Part of the instrument panel





Instrument panel compass





This piece had a grooved pulley for a control cable



One of the larger pieces of wreckage





Oxygen bottles with the American flag



Captain William T. Sproat in his 1940 ROTC photo at Boise High School (Courtesy of Ancestry.com)