

Beechcraft UC-43 #42-38231

April 5, 1943

On March 30, 1943, B-17F #42-29514 from Walla Walla AAF, Washington, went missing over central Idaho. On the morning of April 5, UC-43 #42-38231 arrived from Hill Field, Utah, to assist in the search effort. That afternoon the Beechcraft took off from an emergency airfield at Challis, Idaho, with Capt. William "Bill" Kelly in the pilot's seat, Lt. Arthur Crofts as co-pilot, and USFS ranger Charley Langer as observer. After searching a little over an hour, Capt. Kelly flew up a canyon near Ruffneck Peak. Flying below the ridge line, they reached the end of the canyon and started a left hand turn to reverse course. At that moment the belly fuel tank went dry. Before Capt. Kelly could reach across the cabin and move the tank selector lever, the aircraft stalled and struck trees. It crashed in the forest at 2:47 p.m., killing all three men.

On April 13, a Civil Air Patrol pilot spotted the UC-43 wreckage in deep snow. It took two days for Forest Service personnel to reach the crash and complete the recovery effort. The engine, propeller, landing gear, and parts of the wings were removed. In the years since the crash the wreck has been severely damaged by fire. Nearby Langer Peak and Langer Lake were named in honor of Charley Langer, and a monument to the three men was placed several miles from the crash. Special thanks to Richard Holm, Jane McCoy, and Tate Ogden for help with finding this crash site. Site visited on 8/21/19.

Crew:

Pilot	Captain William W. Kelly
Co-Pilot	2nd Lieutenant Arthur A. Crofts
Observer	U. S. Forest Service Ranger Charles J. Langer



Aircraft mechanic Tate Ogden stands next to the wreckage of #42-38231



Part of the engine mount



A landing light



A pair of cockpit controls, with the co-pilot's rudder pedals visible at lower left



One of the fuel tanks located in the wings



Sprockets, gears and chains associated with the cockpit controls



A wing strut



Part of an elevator



An exhaust pipe



Another view of the crash site



A view of #42-38231 shortly after the crash



Pilot Capt. William W. Kelly (Courtesy of FindAGrave.com)



Charley Langer and his wife Leah
(Courtesy of HMdb.com)



Langer's children, Mary Ann and Charley Jr., next to the monument
after it was completed (Courtesy of HMdb.com)



The monument as it appears today