

Boeing B-17F #42-5484 and Culver PQ-14s

Project Hermit

September 1945

At the end of World War II, USAAF was experimenting with the conversion of surplus aircraft into radio-controlled attack drones. In the event that the Japanese mainland had to be invaded, aircraft packed with fuel and explosives were to be flown by remote control into fortified targets. In late August 1945, B-17F #42-5484 arrived at Wendover Army Air Field, Utah, and was converted for radio-controlled flight. Accompanying it were several Culver PQ-14 aircraft, USAAF's version of the Culver Cadet, which were already in use as target drones. A mountain near the base was selected, targets were marked on the side, and the tests were given the code name Project Hermit. In addition to the B-17F, at least three PQ-14s were deliberately crashed into the mountain during the September 1945 tests. Special thanks to Craig Fuller and Dave Trojan for help with locating these crash sites. Site visited on 10/18/24.

B-17F #42-5484:



Seat adjustment rail



Oxygen bottle



Turbocharger pipe



Air filter



Part of a cylinder head from a Wright Cyclone R-1820 engine



Rudder pedal



Rocker arm from a Wright Cyclone engine



Melted aluminum at the B-17F impact site

PQ-14s:



Firewall



Wood that was used in the construction of PQ-14s



Electric servo used in radio-controlled aircraft



Rudder pedal



Flight control cables and pulleys



Part of a rudder



Landing gear strut



Part of an elevator



B-17F #42-5484 right before impact at the Project Hermit site in 1945 (USAAF photo)



A Culver PQ-14 (USAAF photo)