

**Boeing B-29 #44-84143**

**June 3, 1953**

On the evening of June 3, 1953, Boeing B-29 #44-84143 took off from Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, on a routine training mission. The aircraft was with the 9th Bomb Wing, 1st Bomb Squadron. On board was the crew of 11 men, plus 3 trainees. Shortly after takeoff, the aircraft suffered runaway propellers on engines #2 and #4. The pilot attempted to maintain altitude and circle back to the runway for an emergency landing, but at 5:39 p.m. the bomber struck high voltage power lines and crashed 5 miles from the base. Aircraft commander Captain George R. Roche was killed, and the other 13 men escaped with injuries. A review board found that improper maintenance was the cause of propeller failure. Site visited on 5/2/18. Special thanks to Craig Fuller for help with finding this crash site.

Crew:

Aircraft commander	Capt. George R. Roche
Co-Pilot	1Lt. Thomas R. Fiorillo
Pilot Trainee	Capt. Charles R. Sheldon
Navigator	1Lt. George R. Brown
Bombardier	1Lt. Arnold J. Kietzer
Radar Operator	Capt. James M. McLellan
Flight Engineer	M/Sgt. Francis X. Hiltz
Radio Operator	T/Sgt. Elton R. Grathwohl
Central Fire Control	A/1C James H. Burnworth
Left Gunner	A/1C Patricio Escamilla
Right Gunner	A/1C Donald C. Van Doren
Tail Gunner	A/1C David M. Smiddie
Gunner Trainee	A/1C James H. Mulgannon
Engineer Trainee	A/1C Sherwin Zook













A view of the crash taken on June 3, 1953. (Courtesy of Rolando Escamilla)



The crew of the B-29 taken in Korea in 1952. The accident at Mountain Home AFB occurred shortly after they returned from combat duty in Korea. Back row, left to right: Smiddie, Hiltz, Escamilla, Van Doren Culp, Burnworth. Front row, left to right: McLellan, Fiorillo, Roche, Brown, Kietzer. (Courtesy of Rolando Escamilla)



A/1C Patricio Escamilla, left gunner on #44-84143. He currently lives in Texas at age 84. (Courtesy of Rolando Escamilla, his son)



Capt. George R. Roche, aircraft commander. (Courtesy of Rolando Escamilla)

